

HALESOWEN CHRONICLE



Thursday, December 6, 2012

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Nathan uses his head to raise funding for charity

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Good pickin'

No need to fret for band in warehouse concert

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Czech out time

Jason takes the points during his warm-up bout

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Rubbish battle has so far cost £50,000

A LEGAL row over a towering pile of rubbish overlooking Dudley homes has already cost the taxpayer more than £50,000 it emerged ahead of a High Court showdown next week.

The payout for the Environment Agency includes almost £10,000 for an aircraft to fly over the waste site to create a 3D map.

But the organisation said the clean up at Refuse Derived Fuel Ltd, Brierley Hill, would have been £800,000 if they had not taken court action to ensure an end to the row.

Residents demanded action over the waste pile at the plant.

More than 200 tons of waste was removed by the firm, also known as RDF Ltd. However, a three-day hearing is starting at the High Court sitting in Birmingham on Monday with the Environment Agency demanding further sanctions.

The court will rule on whether the waste pile breached the terms of RDF's permits.

The Environment Agency will also apply for a mandatory injunction against the defendants, requiring the waste to be cleared back.

Figures on estimated legal costs were revealed through a Freedom of Information request.

Tax survey 'is a waste'

DUDLEY Council's biggest ever public consultation - on whether people want to pay more council tax or face a £29 million axe on services - is a waste of money, says a councillor.

The Labour-controlled authority says, if the tax does not increase, it will have to slash £29 million from its budgets.

But Tory opposition leader Councillor Les Jones said: "They are spending thousands of pounds of taxpayers' money saying, basically, we don't know what to do - you tell us."

● Views - Page 3

HELP WANTED FOR ARSON-HIT FAMILY

by Naomi Dunning

FRIENDS are rallying round to help a mother who is in hospital after being badly burned when she was engulfed in flames during an arson attack on a property in Rowley Regis.

Mother-of-two Louise Pilkington suffered 15 per cent burns to her head and neck after the attack at her home early on Sunday. The 31-year-old had to put the flames out by rolling around on the lawn at the front of the house in Haden Walk. The woman's nine-year-old and 13-month-old children were rescued from the house unharmed.

The youngest was treated for smoke inhalation before being taken to Birmingham Children's Hospital.

Miss Pilkington was taken to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham for treatment, where she remains.

Neighbours rushed out to help her before turning their attention to her youngest daughter who was still inside.

They attempted to get in by using a ladder and smashing a bedroom window before fire crews intervened and brought out the baby.

Neighbour Audrey Bayliss, 74, said: "I woke up and looked outside my window and saw the woman rolling around on the lawn."

"I went outside to help her and another neighbour put a towel around her. She was badly burned and frantic, she kept saying 'my baby is up there'."

Neighbour

Another neighbour, Amanda Bissell, 43, called 999 and rushed out to help.

Her husband Andrew, 45, said: "There was a crowd of people who came out of their homes to help." Police say the fire, which happened just before 1am, was started deliberately.

They believe the woman was attacked in her garden before the arsonist deliberately started a fire at the property.

Now her friends Charlie Hands, Emma Bambrick and Tracy Pearsall are trying to do all they can to raise funds for her and her two daughters.

Miss Hands, aged 26, of Witley Crescent, has set up a Facebook group calling for donations of clothes, toys and household appliances to help Miss Pilkington and her daughters.

Anyone wishing to donate to the cause can call Miss Hands on 07858 642569 or go to the Facebook page Help Group For Rowley Regis Fire Family.

A Dudley man, aged 42, has been arrested on suspicion of attempted murder and is also being treated in hospital.

Jack's flying high with his new flag



Unveiling his winning Gornal flag for 2013, Jack Rogers, aged six, of Upper Gornal, with the mayor of Dudley, councillor Melvyn Mottram and community members

A FLAG designed by a six-year-old which celebrates his Dudley village's history, community and future has been unfurled.

The official flag for Gornal was designed as part of a school competition by winning entrant Jack Rogers, of Roberts Primary School. On Saturday, it was unveiled and hoisted on its pole by Dudley's mayor, Coun-

cillor Melvyn Mottram at the corner of Abbey Street and Abbey Road.

The schoolboy's design features the colour green to represent life, black to mark the village's coal mining history and the sun to show the place as bright and cheerful.

Jack said: "Seeing the flag up high in the sky in the village makes me very happy."

Fishing to be allowed at beauty spot again

ANGLERS banned from a pool at a Halesowen beauty spot for two years will be allowed to start fishing there again.

The pool is at the 67-hectare Leasowes site.

It was closed to anglers so that the area surrounding it could recover from what was described as overuse. Concerns were also raised after two ducks became caught in fishing lines and died.

Dudley Council has now declared the area has recovered and, while they will continue to monitor the site, anglers will be welcomed back early next year.

Councillor Tracy Wood, said: "We hope to meet with the anglers' representatives in January and, following this meeting, we will be announcing our plans for the reintroduction of fishing to The Leasowes in 2013."

She added: "The Leasowes is a beautiful historic landscape and it is important that it feels open and accessible to all whether dog walkers, birdwatchers, golfers, anglers or just families enjoying a pleasant day out."

"Thanks to the support of responsible anglers during this temporary suspension, the delicate balance of the pools has been restored."

Fishing would again be allowed at four spots at Leasowes Pool. Campaigners were tight-lipped when asked for their reaction to the lifting on the ban.

Canal Trust jobs on way

NEW jobs will be created as part of a £3million education, exhibition and heritage centre being built by Dudley Canal Trust.

The new building, called The Portal, would be sited at the canal tunnel entrance.

The attraction is looking to appoint new skippers, ticket office attendants and a co-ordinator to oversee the learning and training services.

More positions may become available once the new centre is up and running.

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Breast cancer inspires weight loss



Denise Millard who has lost six stone

WHEN she tipped the scales at 18 stone, Denise Millard knew she had to do something about her weight.

But it was battling breast cancer that inspired her to take the first step. The 52-year-old mother said: "I was going through chemotherapy and I just remember telling myself that, if I came through it, I would do something about my weight. I'd never really wanted to

do anything about it before but I thought, after my cancer, that I'd been given a second chance at life and I shouldn't waste it."

Mrs Millard, of Poole Crescent, Coseley, said she had "always been a big girl" and had put on more weight as an adult due to her health problems. She said: "My exercise level was zero and I was living mainly on junk food. I was also working in a cafe - as I am

now - so I was around food all day."

In March 2010 she finally decided to tackle her weight problem and joined Weight Watchers. After 18 months of hard work, Mrs Millard achieved her goal weight of 11st 6lb in June.

She said: "Everyone was so helpful and I couldn't have got through all this without my wonderful husband Philip and daughter Tammy."



Denise with her husband Philip

£26,000 benefits cheat tells of illness

A WOMAN who fraudulently claimed more than £26,000 in benefits said her estranged husband had moved back into her home to help while she battled cancer.

Jacqueline Mills, aged 43, of Coppice Lane, Brierley Hill, admitted three charges when she appeared at Dudley Magistrates Court last week.

They were failing to notify the Department for Work and Pensions that her husband Stuart Hope had moved back in with her; failing to declare this in order to get tax credits; and failing to tell the council of this change in order to get housing and council tax benefit.

Mr Tim Talbot-Webb, defending, said Mills had been diagnosed with cancer in June 2009 - a few months after she and Mr Hope were separated.

When he realised she was struggling to cope with her illness and their four children - aged between six and 17 - he moved back in, the court was told.

Between then and this June, she was given £26,534.32 in benefits and tax credits which were based on her living as the only adult in the family home.

The hearing was adjourned until January 4 for sentencing.

Inquest told of theft fear

A MAN'S personal belongings were stolen after he shot himself with an air gun at his Lye home, an inquest heard. Stephen Round, aged 38, died in Malvern Avenue, on March 27.

At an inquest at Dudley Coroners' Court last week, his family said they believed his belongings were taken after his death and before emergency services were called. "There was a delay between his father being called and the calling of 999," his sister, Angela Round, said. "His stereo system and bike were missing, and his wallet was empty."

Black Country coroner Robin Balmain said: "Mr Round died of a gun shot wound to the head. He killed himself."

Advent service

THE Mothers' Union in Hagley holds its advent service at St Saviour's Church on December 13.

Wasp sting proved to be fatal for gardener

A LANDSCAPE gardener collapsed and died after being stung by a wasp at his home in Dudley, an inquest has heard.

Raymond Ross, aged 41, suffered face swelling and shortness of breath following the insect bite. He then collapsed and was attended to by emergency paramedics at his home in Dudley.

Christmas cop shops set up to fight crime

POLICE officers will be hitting the high street in a bid to tackle crime and advise shoppers in Stourbridge and Halesowen.

They will be setting up base in two vacant shops in the busy shopping period for pick-pockets operating in the crowds.

Officers are warning people to be vigilant during the busy shopping period for pick-pockets operating in the crowds.

One of the "cop shops" will be in Stourbridge's Ryemarket Shopping Centre.

The other will be in the Queensway, near Halesowen bus station. Both will be open throughout December.

Sgt Steve Gordon, based at Stourbridge police station, has helped organise the project.

He said: "The cop shop will be run by officers and police community support officers to talk to the community and offer crime prevention tips to locals."

"We will be reminding people to keep their handbags close to them, as we do see a rise in pick-pockets at this time of year and will also be offering a property marking service, where we will be happy to securely UV mark your new Christmas goods."

Collapsed

Tests showed he had 200mg of mast cell tryptase per litre of blood. Normal levels range from two to 14mg per litre of blood.

Mr Balmain said: "The pathologist reports this was an extremely high level due to the bee or wasp venom."

He added: "He had been stung by a wasp at home and his face started to swell."

"He had shortness of breath and collapsed."

"Paramedics arriving attempted to resuscitate Mr Ross. But he was pronounced dead at 10.25pm."

The inquest heard how he had regularly been bitten by insects as part of his job, but had never suffered health problems as a result.

Mr Balmain, who recorded a narrative verdict, said: "Mr Ross' death was due to an adverse reaction to an insect bite."

Dancers step to it for exams



Ballet exam success - Neat Feet School of Dance teacher Lynne Rowell with students Eve Spencer, Jack Ciasullo, both aged six, and Megan Philipps, eight

DANCE students have wowed judges with their moves in their latest exams to score top marks.

Members of Neat Feet School of Dance, Brierley Hill, were put through their paces in ballet, tap and freestyle tests.

They have been trained by the school's principal Lynne Rowell over the past few weeks ahead of the exams. The 49-year-old,

from Stourbridge, is an accomplished dancer, having trained at The Ballet Rambert, London and has travelled all over the world dancing and choreographing shows.

Lynne said: "Neat Feet students worked really hard for the big day and I was extremely proud of everyone."

She has also helped friend Jacqueline Parade, from Stafford, pass her teaching exams.

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Archives centre is on track

DUDLEY'S new £6million archives and local history centre is on track to open next summer.

All of the steel structure is in place and the block and brickwork is also being carried out.

In the coming weeks, the roof will be installed on the centre, which is being built near the Black Country Living Museum in Tipton Road.

Friends of Dudley Archives and Local History Service group recently took a tour of the site.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, said: "We are extremely pleased with the progress of the new borough archives centre and are looking forward to its opening next summer."

"We are keen local history groups such as the Friends of Dudley Archives get involved with our service and make use of the new centre's superb facilities."

The centre is being built by Midland's contractor G F Tomlinson and is being part funded by the European Regional Development Fund, as part of the wider redevelopment of the Castle Hill area of Dudley.

Dudley Council's archives service will relocate from Mount Pleasant, Coseley, and when the new building opens it will also be used to store documents for neighbouring Sandwell Council.

Boys stole to buy drug

THREE young foster children stole two televisions from their children's home so they could buy cannabis, a court heard.

One boy aged 16 and two aged 17 made off with the televisions, worth £400, after distracting staff at the home on October 23.

Dudley Youth Court heard they were seen walking down the road with them. By the time they were caught, one set had already been sold - for £30 so that the boys could buy drugs.

All three were given to youth rehabilitation and supervision order and told to each pay £50 costs.

Takeaway plan

PLANS to turn a Dudley shop into a hot food takeaway have been lodged with council chiefs. The proposals for the property in Wolverhampton Street have been submitted by Mohammed Saheed, of Kingswinford.

Superhead faces life ban from classroom



Dame Mo Brennan

A SUPERHEAD could be banned from teaching for life following a disciplinary panel ruling over her time at Hillcrest School, Netherton.

Dame Mo Brennan, who is now headteacher at Barr Beacon School, Aldridge, was found guilty at a hearing last week of unacceptable professional conduct, along with colleagues Shelley Derham and Linda Westwood.

She was awarded the title of dame in 2005 for her work in transforming

the failing Hillcrest. Ofsted inspectors later classed it "outstanding".

The Teaching Agency's professional conduct panel heard that "inappropriate alterations" were made to attendance registers for some pupils at Hillcrest between 2004 and 2007.

Panel members will make a recommendation to the Education Secretary, who will decide whether all three teachers are banned. A prohibition order could be imposed within

two weeks, enforcing either a lifetime ban or a ban which could be reviewed in the future.

Marked

Some disruptive pupils were told to stay at home ahead of GCSE exams instead of being permanently excluded, the hearing was told, but they were marked in records as being "educated off site" or on "study leave" to give an authorised absence. Dame Mo said the practice

would mean that pupil records would not be stained as they tried to get a job or college place.

The disciplinary panel ruled that the three teachers, all of whom now work at Barr Beacon, had acted "dishonestly".

The panel was due to hear mitigation before a decision on action is made.

Governors at Aldridge have back Dame Mo.

Council looks to get views over increase in council tax

FAMILIES in Dudley are being asked to choose between three proposed rises in council tax ranging from 43p to £1 a week as part of the borough council's biggest consultation in its history.

by Heather Large

The authority is aiming to find out whether people in the borough would be willing to pay extra council tax in order to reduce cuts in services. Dudley Council says if council tax does not go up, it will be have to slash £29 million from its budgets over the next three years.

A consultation has now been launched to gauge the views of residents.

People will be given options of whether they would prefer a weekly rise of 43p - two per cent, 75p - 3.5 per cent, or £1 - 4.6 per cent.

Residents will also be asked to say which services they most want to protect, including refuse and recycling collections, child protection, older people's services, regeneration and job creation.

Councillor Pete Lowe, cabinet member for finance, said: "This consultation is about listening to local people and we hope thousands of residents will take up the opportunity."

"This will help us make some big decisions about

council services and establish the priorities which are most important to residents.

"Dudley, like other councils, is facing unprecedented budget pressures and needs to make some really tough decisions."

"Dudley Council delivers more than 800 services to local people and the scale of the choice and the tough decisions before us cannot be underestimated."

"We feel it's vital to embark on a widespread public consultation and listen carefully to our residents' views."

The authority says Dudley's council tax is £14 per month less than the national average.

People will be able to complete the survey in a variety of ways.

It will be included on leaflets in key council buildings such as libraries, leisure centres and Dudley Council Plus and will also be available online.

The consultation will run to the end of February.



Angus McMeeking, of Black Country Ales, with Dudley South MP Chris Kelly

MP takes a tour of brewery

DUDLEY South MP Chris Kelly was taken on a tour of a micro-brewery which is going from strength to strength.

He visited Black Country Ales at the Old Bulls Head pub in Lower Gornal.

The firm supplies beer to its own pubs and other outlets across the region.

Mr Kelly was shown the brewing process and some of the equipment used including fermenting vessels which date back 100 years.

He said: "It has been very interesting to see the process in action here in the Black Country and see traditional brewing methods being used alongside modern ones."

"The BFG ale is a very big seller. It's good to see a local micro-brewery doing so well." Black Country Ales recently opened, bought and refurbished its 28th pub, The Cottage Spring, in Woodsetton.

Mr McMeeking attributes the company's success with the growing popularity of real ale. He also talked to the MP about the campaign to scrap the beer duty escalator.

"Whilst Black Country Ales is acquiring pubs, pubs across the region are closing at the rate of 16 a week, every week."

Mr Kelly said he would be passing on Mr McMeeking's concerns to the minister.

NEWS in brief

Festive safety scheme launched

A CAMPAIGN aimed at helping people in Dudley to stay safe in the run up to Christmas Day has been launched.

Dudley's community safety partnership has launched its 12 safer days of Christmas campaign, which gives residents advice. Tips range from party safety, getting home safely, not drinking and driving to ways to secure homes, valuables and cars. Councillor Judy Foster said: "This campaign gives 12 really simple pieces of safety advice that if they followed could make a big difference."

Diabetics urged to have flu jab

HEALTH officials in Dudley are urging people with diabetes to protect themselves by getting their seasonal flu vaccination as soon as possible.

Clinics are under way in GP surgeries and people with diabetes, along with those aged over 65 and pregnant women, are among the priority groups for free jabs. Dr David Hegarty, chairman of Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group, said: "People should not underestimate the effects of seasonal flu."

Woman is facing charges of fraud

A WOMAN accused of failing to declare that she was working while claiming benefits denied the charges when she appeared at Dudley Magistrates Court.

Tanya Grey, aged 24, of Copest Road, Dudley, appeared in court last week on two charges, dating from November 2010 and this September. The case will be re-called on December 11 when a date will be set for her trial.

Council to pick up tax shortfall

DUDLEY Council will pick up the cost of central government's reduction in council tax rebate.

The Government is reducing the subsidy for councils to administer council tax rebates leaving Dudley facing a £2.4 million shortfall. The cost will be absorbed in the council budget meaning no change for residents.

Pest control up

MORE pest controllers will be available to tackle mice and rat infestations across Dudley borough. The service was cut two but now the council plans to spend £100,000 recruiting two more

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NEWS

THE BEST
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WONDERFUL line from Derek Jacobi as the Yorkshire pensioner in Last Tango in Halifax (BBC1). He runs a finger along the lines of boys in his old school photograph muttering: "He's dead, he's dead." And then he lowers his voice because what's coming next is even worse than death: "He went down South."

□□□□□□□□

A TALE of tatters. News reaches me of a lady whose washing machine and tumble dryer gave up the ghost at the same time. The repair man explained it would cost him at least £40 to dispose of them. The alternative, he suggested, was to leave the appliances on the drive in the hope that the scrap-metal men would take them overnight. The lady declared sniffily that it was not that sort of neighbourhood but agreed to go along with the plan. So the repair man heaved the washing machine out of the house and on to the drive and went back inside for the dryer. By the time he came out with the tumble dryer a few minutes later, the washing machine had gone.

□□□□□□□□

AM I the only male who sniggers at the opening of the Marks & Spencer Christmas TV advert? It's the one where four women throw two snowballs each at the camera, and not one of them manages to hit it. Snowballs - it's a bloke thing.

□□□□□□□□

A NOTE in the windscreen of an abandoned car at our local road read: "Broke down due to flood". Or possibly due to idiot.

□□□□□□□□

STILL in Scotland, the authorities are searching for a name for the new Forth Road Bridge which is currently known by the rather drab name of the Forth Replacement Crossing. A reader points out that as the Forth already has four major crossings, this new one could be called the Fifth Forth Bridge, or even the Forth Fifth Bridge. I find myself reminded of that great Scottish football score: East Fife four, Forfar five.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Cost-cutting means 26 museum staff to leave

TWENTY-SIX workers are leaving the Black Country Living Museum through redundancy as part of cost-cutting plans. It follows a 11-week consultation with staff since it was announced that up to 70 jobs were at risk.

Police job failure led to suicide

A TAXI driver killed himself after failing to get his dream job as a policeman, an inquest heard.

Thomas Spair, aged 23, of Poplar Green, Dudley, was found hanged from a tree near Wrens Hill Road.

Police tried to revive him, but paramedics pronounced him dead at the scene on March 8.

An inquest at Dudley Coroners' Court, heard his mother, Jennifer Wright, say: "He wanted to be a policeman, but kept failing the tests and that did depress him."

He suffered a mental depressive episode two years ago, but later stopped taking prescribed medication.

Black Country Coroner Robin Balmain recorded a verdict of suicide. He said: "This is a very sad, he was a young man who had a lot going for him."

A drop in visitor numbers and funding cuts left the tourist attraction needing to save £250,000 a year.

Chief executive Andrew Lovett confirmed 22 staff opted to leave through voluntary redundancy but there were four compulsory.

Voluntary redundancies included some costumed demonstrators. Meanwhile, 36 costumed guides get new roles as costumed learning assistants in a revamp of educational services. Most remaining guides will be casual demonstrators.

Avoiding

Mr Lovett said an 11-week consultation involved almost 280 individual and group consultation meetings to adapt operations and management to cut costs and improve engagement with educational groups.

At the beginning 155 staff were identified as being 'at risk' of redundancy and much consultation focused on avoiding compulsory redundancies.

In September, it was revealed the museum would close twice a week between November and Easter to save money.

All-out effort raises £1,500



Fundraising triathlon competitors Edward Walker, left, and Harry Browne with Jackie Tromans, a member of the Thomas Pocklington Trust

TWO teenagers tested their mettle in a triathlon to raise money for charity.

Edward Walker and Harry Browne, both pupils at Old Swinford Hospital, Stourbridge generated £1,500 for the Thomas Pocklington Trust.

The pair, both aged 17, entered the the Warwickshire Triathlon which comprises a 400m swim, 23km cycle and a 5km run.

They finished in times of 1hr 19min and 1hr 25min respectively.

It is held in Stratford-upon-Avon and was aimed at all abilities and fitness levels, in aid of the trust, which helps people who are blind or have sight loss.

Edward said: "During the summer holidays we decided to set ourselves the challenge of completing a triathlon and make it more worthwhile by raising money for charity. "We chose the Pocklington Trust as we have entertained the residents at the Stourbridge centre with the Old Swinford Hospital music groups."

First fun run cash handed to charity

ORGANISERS of a new fun run have handed over their first charity donation.

Olympians Jess Varnish and Kristian Thomas joined Paralympic stars Jordanne Whitley and Helen Scott to hand out medals to hundreds of runners in the Halesowen Fun Run in September.

It was the first road race to take place in the town centre organised by Halesowen and Rowley Regis Rotary Club. More than £6,000 was raised for good causes with around 450 ran in the 5k race.

Rotarians made the first of three £2,000 presentations to the event's chosen charities in November. Money will be split equally between MacMillan Cancer Support, Birmingham Children's Hospital and the Midlands Air Ambulance.

Staff from the Midlands Air Ambulance in Brierley Hill, were invited to a lunch to receive their cheque. Rotarian and fun run organiser Alan Bowler said: "To have raised £6,000 from our first ever Halesowen Fun Run has far exceeded all of our expectations"

Driver cut free

A MOTORIST was cut free from a car after a crash on the border of Dudley and Wolverhampton. The two-car accident happened at the junction of Hurst Road and Chicks Avenue, Coseley, last Tuesday evening. Police said nobody was seriously hurt.



Leasowes Sports Centre

Winter

Class Timetable

DAY	TIMES	CLASS
Monday	18.00-19.00	Aerobics
	19.00-20.00	Boxercise
Tuesday	18.00-19.00	Zumba
	19.00-20.00	Circuit
	20.00-21.30	Fitness Yoga
Wednesday	18.00-18.30	Aerobics Blast
	18.30-19.30	Pump
	19.30-20.30	Pilates
Thursday	17.30-18.15	Family Bokwa
	18.30-19.30	Military Circuit
Saturday	19.30-20.30	Zumba
	9.30-10.15	Zumba Blast
Sunday	10.00-11.00	Zumba
	11.00-12.00	Pilates
	15.30-16.30	Military Circuit

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Sunday 23rd December
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WATKINS

Company returns to its roots with shop

A coach firm has returned to its roots – opening a base in Halesowen where it was founded almost 60 years ago.

Evergreen Coaches cut the ribbon at its new shop in Peckingham Street on Saturday.

The move, which could create up to 10 jobs, comes almost 60 years after firm founder Stanley Field started the coach operation.

The shop opening is part of an expansion this year, which has seen new holiday destinations unveiled and hiring of 10 drivers.

Director Ravi Soomal said: "The shop will make it easier for our strong customer base in Halesowen and the surrounding towns to use us."

"The economy is difficult at the moment, but we feel it is important to continue to grow and meet the demand. The idea of coach travel abroad is still very popular, and we want to provide a service which matches what people expect."

The coach firm has its headquarters in Alma Street, Smethwick. It has a fleet of 45 coaches and has 30 scheduled routes planned for 2013. Mrs Soomal said: "Many people grew up with coaches and went on their first holiday aboard one."

Kit helper call

HALESOWEN Town Football Club wants a matchday kitman or woman. Email info@ht-fc.com for details.

CCTV centre puts police in the picture 24 hours a day

WITH almost 200 CCTV screens from cameras that record 24 hours a day, seven days a week, this is the unit that tracks the movements of crime suspects in Dudley borough.

The Chronicle was given a behind-the-scenes look in the camera room in Dudley, which has been instrumental in finding missing children, catching criminals and identifying troublemakers.

Councils across Wolverhampton, Walsall and Sandwell also have similar units on their patches.

Staff on the unit link-in with police and security guards across the Dudley borough to alert them to incidents as they happen.

And within an hour of being in the unit, the advantages of the 177 cameras, which are of such high quality that they can read a tax disc on a car from 200 yards, are clear.

One man was detained by security staff in Stourbridge bus station just 90 seconds after allegedly stealing goods from a nearby store.

Traced

Meanwhile in Dudley, a man was arrested in Churchill Precinct after someone was spotted loading £95 worth of chocolate into a shopping basket and making off.

Elsewhere, a woman was assaulted by a female customer in Dudley's Iceland store. CCTV operators were able to find the suspected attacker and traced her to nearby Birmingham Street, where she was arrested on suspicion of assault.

And during the early hours of Tuesday, a man was arrested and charged after he was caught on camera allegedly breaking into a staff room at Dudley bus station.

Sgt Rob Simpson said having links to the unit, which is run and maintained by Dudley Borough Council, was vital.

"The cameras are invaluable," he said. "If



The camera room in Dudley which has been instrumental in everything from finding missing children to catching criminals

you take the example of a missing child, you can flood an area the child was last seen with officers but camera can search that area much more quickly."

"The cameras are not hidden so people can see where they are. It isn't about watching people, the cameras are there for the prevention of crime."

Experts say the cameras have played an integral part in fighting crime, including help track people who caused trouble during the English Defence League protest in Dudley in 2010.

Detectives were able to review the footage after the violence and identify those

involved, pinpoint what they had done and then move to make arrests. CCTV operative Dave Sneyd, who has been in the job for 12 years, said as well as the serious side of his work, there are moments of humour.

"Christmas can provide entertaining CCTV viewing. I've seen tugs-of-war over presents and a man's wig was pulled off in one scuffle," he said. "One man walked into a speed camera along the Stourbridge Ring Road and knocked himself. That was serious because he had fallen and his head was on the road, so we quickly got someone down there to help him."

The emergence of digital technology has

helped improve the quality of CCTV over the past five years. Previously, footage was recorded on VCR with a tape-change every 12 hours meaning, footage of a particular incident could not be looked at until the 12-hour loop was complete.

But now, footage is recorded digitally, so officers can review it immediately.

Sgt Simpson said the quality of footage had also improved dramatically making it difficult for offenders to wriggle out of crimes when the evidence was put in front of them.

CCTV manager Julie Jones added: "A picture speaks a thousand words."

NEWS

in brief

Donation stall is helping carers

SAINSBURY'S at Amblecote is launching an appeal for soft toys, books and other toys to help raise cash for its chosen charity.

The goods will be displayed on a stand called Teddy Towers and sold for a small donation to INSIGHT for Carers, based in Pearson Street, Brierley Hill. Since its launch in June, the stall has contributed £600.

Restaurant manager, Chris Holloway, said: "The scheme has proved really popular and gives people a chance to recycle unwanted goods."

College student at charity awards

HALESOWEN College student Rosie Paley was runner up at an award ceremony for the Encephalitis Society.

Rosie had been short-listed from 90 people after writing a poem and completing art work to show how encephalitis, which is an acute inflammation of the brain, has affected her life.

The 17-year-old from Brierley Hill was runner-up in the art category, with her work called Expressions of Encephalitis. Rosie is studying a BTEC Level Two in Women's Hairdressing.

Christmas dance

A Christmas tea dance will be held at Halesowen's Cornbow Hall, Hagley Street, on December 13 at 2pm and tickets cost £2.50.

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NEWS

Traffic pollution at root of poor air quality fears

TRAFFIC congestion around Dudley has been blamed for poor air quality by campaigners demanding action over the problem.

A report looking into congested routes around Dudley is being drawn up to tackle pollution hotspots.

People in Netherton have grown increasingly concerned about traffic jams with vehicles pumping out exhaust fumes. Cars queuing along the main Halesowen Road through the town and at the Cinder Bank island are among the problem areas.

Netherton is one of a number of places being analysed. Others include the busy A491 through Wordsley and Kingswinford.

Councillor Qadar Zada took the issue up with Dudley Council environment chief, Councillor Tracey Wood.

"I've been talking about Netherton air quality since my election and I want to be sure there is some improvement since we started these discussions with the council," he said.

"We have supported actions in the town to reduce traffic which appears to be a contributor."

"A report on air quality is due early next year and I will be looking forward to the report with interest to see what the impact has been. If there isn't any improvement I will be expecting stronger action."

Councillor Wood said improvements to air quality throughout the borough remained a key priority.

The council has an air quality action plan with the progress reported every year to the Environmental Scrutiny Committee.

Women's choir at hall

A DUDLEY women's choir is staging a Christmas concert next week.

The Ellenvale Singers will be performing at Brierley Hill Civic Hall on December 12 starting from 7.30pm with a mix of music.

Tickets are £7.50 for adults and £3.50 for children. Call 01902 674831 for more details.

Hair's to you Nathan



Nathan Gill, aged eight, is supporting Birmingham Children's Hospital

A DUDLEY schoolboy has said goodbye to his shoulder-length hair to raise money for Birmingham Children's Hospital.

Eight-year-old Nathan Gill from Brierley Hill had his dark blond

locks shaved for the Super Santa fundraising appeal. The youngster, who goes to Withymoor Primary School has so far raised £50 for the charity after generous friends and family supported his efforts.

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LETTERS

Back Hippodrome, stop the rot

SO, we see that Dudley Hippodrome has finally some support! The Theatres Trust says the Hippodrome should be kept for future generations and they have seen a lot of listed buildings in a worse state.

Yet again, Dudley Council showing no signs of support for Dudley nor for its heritage. I am utterly ashamed of them and the way they have let Dudley centre rot and they continue to do so.

They keep talking all this nonsense about regeneration, yet they still allow tatty shops in and places of to be proud of in the Hippodrome out.

We have such a wonderful history

and slowly we are losing that identity. All down to Dudley Council, AGAIN!

Dudley Zoo want it for a car park, yet there is ample parking close by that looks like a building site that could be used and The Black Country Living Museum has no interest in helping either!

Easy answers really, both are probably concerned that if the Hippodrome is restored to its former glory they will surely lose out on takings.

Has nobody even considered amalgamating all three together? The entertainments group Merlins links all major UK attractions together under

one brand - Sea life, Alton Towers, Lego Land and Warwick Castle to name a few. Is this not something can be done? All three working together, getting Dudley back on track? One town, three major attractions!

Castle Hill has been the big selling point for regeneration but what do we have there to encourage visitors? McDonald's, Nandos, cinema, more restaurants, a pub, a hotel and some offices. Wow! Get me a day saver so I can stay in Dudley all day.

MATTHEW POUND
Camberley Crescent
Ettingshall Park

Thank you for towing kindness

I TOOK my mother to Col's car boot sale, Wall Heath, last Wednesday and we had a pleasant morning there.

Unfortunately, on attempting to leave my car became stuck in the churned-up mud. Try as I might, I couldn't get the car out and was desperate when I realised I didn't have my mobile phone with me. I tried putting mum's blanket under the wheel and paper and car mat but still it refused to budge. Several cars passed by then, after nearly 30 minutes of trying my knight in shining armour came by. He stopped, and offered to tow me out of the mud. What a gentleman!

I would just like to thank this kind gent for his kindness. I offered him money but he refused saying that his Range Rover was his "baby". I am 71 and my mother 92. Thank goodness for 4 x 4 vehicles and someone who was concerned for another's welfare.

MRS JEAN GREENHALL
Denleigh Road
Kingswinford

LETTERS to the Editor

POST

Halesowen Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial, 51-53
Queen Street, Wolverhampton
WV1 1ES

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number of the writer. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

E-MAIL

Dudley.chrons@
expressandstar.co.uk

Turn grass verges into parking space

FOLLOWING the recent statement by Dudley Council that spending cuts necessitate some services including roadside grass cutting are to be decreased, it would be a good time to consider replacing grass verges with parking bays.

This would be especially beneficial in roads that contain blocks of two or three storey flats that have no allocated parking spaces, even more so, as in the road that I live, you have semi-detached houses one side and three storey flats opposite. The majority of residents living in the houses have gone to the expense of having off road parking facilities constructed on their own property and have paid Dudley Council a considerable sum to have the kerbs dropped (a legal requirement). The fact that there are no dropped kerbs outside the flats, the residents that can, park kerbside in the road and the remainder make use of our dropped kerbs and park on the pavement.

Now the residents in the houses suffer from cars being parked on the pavements outside their homes, restricting access to their property and causing inconvenience to pedestrians, especially parents with children in pushchairs and the less able in wheelchairs or mobility scooters.

JOHN H LONG, Regent Street, Dudley

Cafe culture gone mad

NEVER mind all the empty shops in Dudley Town Centre and surroundings, what about all the take-aways, coffee shops and fast food outlets that are springing up week by week?

I was led to understand the building on the corner of Priory Street/New Street was being done up for a restaurant, and then suddenly after this renovation seems to be complete but still vacant, comes news the Carvers old cafe in Priory Street is still on the cards. Has Dudley Council gone

cafe culture mad?
MRS L SHELTON
The Broadway
Dudley

So-low comment

WHILE the Peter Rhodes column is sometimes witty, sometimes controversial and often pure self-indulgent, the item on the social workers of Rotherham reached the lowest level of newspaper comment possible. Bigoted and smug are not terms that can be arbitrarily used in a case that has not yet been fully analysed.

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NEWS

£2.6m bid to restore park gates will be sent

A BID for £2.6 million of lottery cash to revamp a Stourbridge park and restore its historic gates will be lodged in February. The council is working on a second application for a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

by Heather Large

The main Grade II listed gates at Mary Stevens Park are in urgent need of restoration with brick and ironwork showing signs of decay.

The council was awarded an initial grant of £116,000 to develop its proposals further ahead of submitting the second round application.

A report by council chief executive, John Polychronakis, said: "Using this HLF grant of £116,000 the council is now developing detailed designs and documentation for the submission of a second round application."

"The estimated value of this second round bid is £2,671,000 and at this stage the anticipated HLF contribution would be £2,156,000."

The council would make

up the shortfall with cash already put aside for the work.

A decision on the application is expected to be made by lottery chiefs by June next year.

Other priorities include the restoration of the war memorial and works to the pool and entrance gates around the park.

Any remaining funding could be used to open a cafe or refreshment kiosk.

Residents were consulted on the plans in the summer.

As part of the plans, the council has been gathering information and checking on animals inhabiting the park.

A protected species survey will give additional insight into animals living in the park to make sure the proposals don't have an

Sky-bound Tardis to raise charity funds



With the mini Tardis is organiser Karl Jones

ONE of the world's most famous science fiction television series props will be spinning its way into the skies again – albeit a miniature version. The Dr Who Tardis is to be sent on a mission into the sky to raise money for CLIC Sargent, the children's cancer charity.

A little camera will be attached to the Tardis which, in turn, is attached to a helium balloon. The camera will take photos of the Tardis' trip. Organiser Karl Jones, of Western Road, Stourbridge, said: "To send the Tardis and video camera to the edge of space we'll use a helium filled weather balloon. As the balloon climbs, the air pressure gets lower and the balloon expands until it gets so big it bursts."

Parachute

The community children's nurse said this should happen at about 32,000 metres. Once the balloon has burst the three-inch-high plastic Tardis and camera will fall back to earth supported by a home-made parachute.

The 48-year-old and his helpers will then track it down using a GPS tracker. The launch is planned for Saturday 8 but it will depend on weather. He said the team had already launched the Tardis once before – in Shropshire in August.

He added: "It worked well but we thought we could do better. We also saw the potential to raise some money for

Take good care this winter . . .

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NEWS

Taxi-ban Jack, 104, kept waiting in A&E 12 hours



Jack Jones – upset over his long wait at Russells Hall Hospital

A 104-YEAR-OLD man was left waiting for 12 hours for a lift home from Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital because staff refused to let him call a taxi, over health and safety fears.

NHS chiefs have now apologised to Jack Jones, who was told he would have to wait for an ambulance to take him home after he was discharged from following a fall.

He was left waiting in the accident and emergency department until he was finally driven six miles to the sheltered housing complex in Stourbridge where he lives.

Mr Jones, who built Spitfire fighter planes at Longbridge in Birmingham, during the Second World War, was admitted to Russells Hall Hospital at 8am on October 26.

He was examined and after he was given the all clear he was told he could go but he did not arrive home until 10pm that night.

Upset

He was told by medical staff that it was against the hospital's policy to let elderly patients go home on their own.

Mr Jones, whose wife Winifred died in 1990 aged 81, said: "I was very upset that I was left waiting for so long for a lift home."

"I told the hospital staff that I use a taxi driver who knows me and would help me to my front door but they refused."

"It was a very long day considering how close it was to my home."

The Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, which runs the hospital, has apologised for the delay and promised to prioritise elderly patients in the future.

Chief executive Paula Clark said: "We are extremely sorry Mr Jones experienced such a significant wait for his transport home and apologise for this."

"Following meetings between all parties changes have been instigated including temporary investment in an additional crew."

No-insurance crash driver fined

A YOUNG man who crashed his car into a telegraph pole while driving without insurance has been fined.

Philip Burbridge, aged 20, had been driving his VW Passat along Whitegates Road, Coesley, when he smashed into the pole on October 30.

Burbridge, of Yorkdale Close, Dudley, then approached the officer who had been called to the scene and admitted to being the driver and only

having a provisional licence. Police later found he also had no insurance, Mr Barry Sealeaf, prosecuting, said.

Burbridge pleaded guilty to driving without insurance and not in accordance with his licence when he appeared at Dudley Magistrates' Court last week.

He was fined £110 for no insurance and told to £80 £80 and a £20 surcharge.

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MEMORY LANE



A march to celebrate the freedom of the borough in Cannock in 1952



Members of The Royal Engineers Association line up for a picture taken back in 1997



The opening of new drill hall on the Walsall Road back in 1932



Bob Leighton from Hednesford with his albums on the Cannock Royal Engineers TA group

History group delight at poignant TA album

STUNNED historians have been handed precious photographs of former Territorial Army servicemen from Staffordshire going back to 1911.

The pictures document a 50-year history of the Cannock-based 213th Royal Engineers from their origins at Norton Hall in Norton Canes to the early years at their current drill hall, built in 1932, at Bridgtown.

Most poignant are images from the First World War, showing local soldiers in France, and at training camps before the conflict started.

The album was compiled by a Captain Lakeland, who lived at Heath Hayes and became a member of the Old Comrades Association, formed after the Second World War by the surviving Royal Engineers from the area.

He handed it to fellow member

by Marion Brennan

and former regular soldier Bob Leighton, of Tudor Road, Hednesford, for safe keeping after he left Cannock for Wales to join the Royal Monmouth Royal Engineers Militia. That was 20 years ago.

Bob has kept it in pristine condition in his wardrobe ever since.

Now the Bridgtown and District Local History Society wants to preserve the album for future generations by placing it in their archives.

Bob, now 80, says: "When Captain Lakeland gave it to me, he said 'hold on to this.' If the branch ever folded, I was going to send it to the Royal Engineers Museum at Chatham.

"But the members of the history society are fascinated by it."

The album also contains newspaper cuttings, memorial cards and even a telegram from the Queen at Balmoral wishing the Territorials

well. The history of the 213th goes back to 1908 when the 2nd North Midland Field Company was established at Norton Hall, which was long ago destroyed by mining subsidence. Immediately before the First World War, it became known as the 213th Field Company.

Later, the unit went to Egypt for a month before returning to France for the duration of the war.

Private

In the years preceding the Second World War it was regarded as one of the best within the 46th North Midland Division and known affectionately in the town as 'Cannock's private army.'

The history group's secretary Derrick Middleton said: "We were bowled over when we saw the book. It's a wonderful record."

He said in the short-term the society would be using it in their talks and newsletters.



Members making a pontoon bridge at Wyke Regis camp in 1957



Royal Engineers TA group's former home at Norton Hall in 1910

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NEWS

Zoo plans new walkway for better visitor access

Awards for volunteers



RBL vice chairman Florence Jepson, president Olive Clark, secretary Gwen Philpott and standard bearer Dawn Rides show the certificates

HONOURS have been handed out to two long-serving members of the Royal British Legion.

Olive Clark and Dawn Rides were rewarded for their dedication to the Women's Section of the Kingswinford branch at its recent annual general meeting.

The women were presented with Certificates of Merit at the Club in Summerhill.

Mrs Clark, from Norton, Stourbridge, has been a member since February 1985 and soon became the

branch care visitor, a post she still holds today. In 2006 Mrs Clark became President of the Women's Section.

Mrs Rides, from Valley Fields in Kingswinford, joined in 1981 and from 1984 to the present day has been the branch standard bearer.

For a number of years she was also the county standard bearer. She also became branch treasurer in 1989.

The 47-year-old mother-of-two joined up when she was 16.

DUDLEY Zoo has revealed plans for a new walkway to help visitors have better access around the attraction.

Bosses said the scheme was being developed to help people with mobility problems and parents with pushchairs to navigate the site.

A planning application has gone into Dudley Council for the works. Dudley Zoological Gardens chief executive Peter Suddock said the walkway would link Penguin Bay to the Reptile House, allowing visitors to bypass a set of steep steps beside the 11th century castle.

He added: "We know from customers' feedback that the steps, which were constructed in 1937 when the zoo opened, are difficult to negotiate with buggies and the walkway will offer a direct and level solution to get visitors across this part of the site."

A main pedestrian route at the zoo passes between bear and reptile enclosures and connects these areas to the penguin enclosure.

The route is steep in places and has two flights of stairs set into the hill.

This makes one of the main routes through the complex particularly difficult for wheelchairs, pushchairs and the elderly.

Instead, the zoo wants to replace the route with a timber walkway that begins beside the reptile house and ends at the top of the old stairs, meaning a step-free access to the penguin house which is higher up the hill. The £15,000 walkway, funded by the European Regional Development Fund, would be made of decking.

Mystery over dead dog

A DEAD dog which had suffered head wounds was found lying next to a baseball bat in Stourbridge.

Police discovered the carcass of the black Staffordshire bull terrier on Wassell Grove Lane, opposite the Old Halesowians Rugby Club.

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NEWS

Inspections at ground passed after three years

CRUCIAL safety inspections at a Midlands non-league football ground were passed, three years after warnings were first given.

Officials have given work at the home of Halesowen Town Football Club the thumbs up at a recent inspection.

Inspectors from the Football Association gave The Grove stadium a glowing report following major improvement works.

The ground in Old Hawne Lane, Halesowen, has achieved a grade D rating after officials decided against pursuing a higher rating.

The Football Association threatened the club with relegation three years ago after officials identified urgent repairs at The Grove.

The Yeltz currently play in the Northern League Division One South and would be able to be promoted into the Premier Division, under the present grading system.

Cat Billy needs a home



Billy the cat with Carrie Banks from the vets practice

MEET Billy the black and white cat who is a dead ringer for the moggie from the Felix television adverts. The playful cat is being nursed back to health by staff at Stewarts veterinary practice in Dudley. They believe the stray had been struck by a car and had suffered a bad eye injury.

Billy, who is estimated to be between 12 and 18 months old, underwent an operation and is making a full recovery. Staff are looking to find Billy, who has been neutered, a new home. Anyone interested can call 01384 252817.

Rapid improvement at school is outstanding

A sports college in Lower Gornal has been praised by Ofsted for the "rapid improvement" that has gained it an outstanding report. Ellowes Hall Sports College was rated outstanding in all areas by inspectors who visited the school in mid-November.

They noted that "rapid improvements have been made because of the very high ambition and drive of the headteacher". The inspectors added that students, staff and parents were "extremely proud" to be associated with the school.

At its last inspection the school had been given a "good" rating.

Headteacher Mr Andy Griffiths said: "Inspectors found the overall quality of teaching to be outstanding with strengths including teachers' planning, subject knowledge and high expectations.

Feature

"They also concluded that students' excellent behaviour and positive attitudes helped them learn well.

"The range of subjects on offer was found to be a strong feature of the school and played a major part in helping students to achieve outstanding outcomes."

by Sharon Marris

The report said results for Year 11 students had improved significantly year on year, particularly in English and mathematics, and were well above average.

It said all groups of students, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs, were making "outstanding progress".

Inspectors had visited the school coincidentally during the school's production of The Phantom of the Opera, Mr Griffiths added.

Chairman of the school's governing body Mr Geoff Marsh welcomed the report and said he was pleased everyone's hard work had been recognised.

Waste management firm Biffa taken over

WASTE management company Biffa, which has a major operation in the West Midlands, has been taken over.

The group, which employs 6,300, has debts of £1.1 billion and had been trying to find a buyer. It said the deal, which is due to be completed in January, should secure its future.

Major lenders including Anglo Gordon, Avenue Capital Group and Babson Capital Europe, have agreed to exchange debts for ownership and invest a further £75 million. It will reduce the debt to £520m.

It comes as the Biffa waste plant in Cannock was given four months to clean up its act and cut foul smells that are seeping from the site or face closure.

The Environment Agency will launch action to shut down the £24 million plant in Newlands Park if it is not satisfied improvements have been made by March.

Area manager Steve Morley announced the cut-off point at a public meeting recently, which heard Biffa has spent £800,000 to reduce the stench. Consultants MWH were commissioned to assess odours emanating from the plant.



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CLUB NEWS

Members are told of Christmas traditions

TRYSUILL & SEISDON WI

Examples of tree in a bag shown

'JERUSALEM' was sung at the beginning of the November meeting after which, visitors and a new member were welcomed.

President Sue Cottrell introduced the speaker and demonstrator for the evening, Linda Jackson.

Linda is a member of Trysull and Seisdon WI and her theme was 'Christmas Tree in a Bag'.

Linda had recently joined the 'Bantock Bodgers', a local group who meet once a week 'rag rugging' and Linda had made a Christmas tree using the method.

Linda assembled the tree, filling it with holly and a variety of Christmas decorations.

Linda created a number of floral decorations including a 'Byzantine' Christmas tree using spruce and a variety of foliage, the biggest cupcake with flowers including smaller cupcakes to fit on the cake stand, a splendid 'tree house', using winter white rose, a pink Christmas door wreath.

The floral arrangements were raffled and the winners were Liz, Peggy, Freda, Sue, Pauline, Barbara, Doreen, Ena and Freda Fellows.

A cuppa and a cake rounded off the evening in true WI style.

The group WI Carol Service will be held at Swindon on December 15 at 3pm. The next WI meeting is on Thursday December 13, the Christmas dinner party.



Shugborough collections assistant Gemma Oakley was guest speaker

CODSALL WOOD WI

PRESIDENT Beryl Atkins welcomed everyone to the November meeting. A party went to Bridgmore Garden Centre and thoroughly enjoyed the day, despite the awful weather.

After the business Beryl welcomed Gemma Oakley, from Shugborough, collections assistant at the County Museum. There are more than 28,000 objects and 46,000 photographs there, including social history objects, agricultural objects, costumes and vehicles. They are all to do with Staffordshire, either made in the county or used by people who live there.

Gemma went on to describe the traditional Christmas. During the medieval period Christmas lasted for 12 days which is the time it took for the gifts to welcome Christ into the world. By the time Queen Victoria died gifts and cards had developed. Christmas cards first came in the 1840s.

Food also developed. Goose and swan were popular among the wealthy. Turkey came about during the 18th and 19th centuries. Christmas puddings were originally made of meat. By 1595 it was known as plum pudding. Mince pies used to be made of meat and poultry.

Christmas crackers were a Victorian invention by Tom Smith in 1846, while Father Christmas appeared in 1870s.

Gemma had brought along many old Christmas cards, which mainly were illustrated with the coming of spring. The competition of a Christmas decoration was won by Hazel Bristow, second was Margaret Britton.

Ladies enjoy retail therapy

SEDGLEY MORNING TG

MEMBERS celebrated the 17th birthday in October and were entertained by Mr Proudman with songs from the shows. Afterwards, they all enjoyed a bring and share buffet lunch.

November's business was followed by a talk from Roger Brooks, of Wiltshire

Farm Foods. In November, a party of members took a trip to Masson Mills Shopping Outlet near Matlock, Derbyshire which is housed in an old Cotton Mill. Despite a

foggy start, it lifted enough to allow members to get a good view of the Derbyshire Dales. The ladies enjoyed a few hours of retail therapy and some visited the Mill Museum.

The Christmas lunch is at The Kingfisher Restaurant, on December 13.

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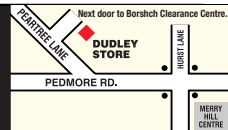
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NEWS

Community hall revamp is speeding along now

WORK has started on a £900,000 revamp of a community hall in Bewdley. Contractors have been appointed to renovate St George's Hall in Load Street and hoardings are up at the site.

by Heather Large

Bewdley Development Trust, which is behind the scheme, has been given a deadline of May to get the work completed as part of the terms of a funding agreement with the Department for the Environment.

The first phase will see an existing extension at the building torn down.

A three-storey one would be built to expand space inside the hall, which will be refurbished to provide a cafe, toilets and meeting rooms.

Bosses also want to create smaller rooms which can be hired out to local organisations to generate funds for the running costs of the hall and future renovation work.

They are hoping to create a balcony to boost the capacity of the hall to 250 seats, but, at the moment, this hinges on additional funding from Defra.

They announced that work was getting started at a

public meeting at Bewdley Baptist Church last week.

Director of Bewdley Development Trust, John Iles, said: "We've gone from nothing happening to having to move very quickly which is why when the contract was signed with the contractors, they were on site the same day."

"It is great to be finally starting work. Now we want to know what the people of Bewdley would like St George's Hall to offer or be used for."

Wyre Forest MP Mark Garnier has welcomed the start of work, saying: "The new community hub facility will provide a fantastic local boost to Bewdley town centre. Its refurbished design will offer flexibility."

"This project has been driven by local support, showing that growth is most effective when community groups work together."

There's no need to fret over festivities



Danielle Saxon Reeves gets ready for the show

BANJO, mandolin and guitar players will be taking part in a Christmas showcase in Stourbridge on Saturday. The Midlands Fretted Orchestra will take to the stage at The Bonded Warehouse, Canal Street. The musicians are promising festive favourites alongside traditional carols.

Director Danielle Saxon Reeves, from Stourbridge, said: "The evening promises a host of seasonal favourites including music by Prokofiev and Corelli, as well as Christmas carols and favourite festive sing-alongs, and will this year also feature a local community choir."

Old toys and books plea

AN appeal has been launched for old toys and books to help raise money for a Brierley Hill charity.

Staff at Sainsbury's, Amblecote have kickstarted the fundraising drive to boost volunteers at Insight for Carers. Insight in Pearson Street, offers a range of carers support services across in the region.

Donated goods will be displayed on a stand called Teddy Towers where they will be sold for the charity.

For a full list of Insight's services visit www.insightforcarers.org or call 01384 483708.

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NEWS

Gran's 600-mile cycle challenge for hospice



Jenny Sargent - getting on her bike for charity

INSTEAD of using her planned retirement to take it easy, a 60-year-old Halesowen grandmother is planning to cycle 600 miles across India in aid of Acorns Children's Hospice.

Jenny Sargent is retiring from her teaching position at Halesowen College next summer and is planning to join the hospice's 10-day cycling trek.

She said: "I was looking for a way to celebrate my retirement and, when I heard that Acorns was doing a cycle across India, I thought: 'why not?'"

Mrs Sargent has already raised £800 through car boot sales, donations and coffee mornings and she said she had many more fundraising ideas up her sleeve.

For now, however, she has less than a year to train - with her cycling trek due to start at Jaipur on November 13 next year.

She said: "I think the biggest challenge will be cycling in the weather conditions and on the rough terrain."

"I got back on my bike again this summer and started training."

"I've always enjoyed cycling so I'm really looking forward to the challenge."

Mrs Sargent will cover up 60 miles each day before crossing the finish line at Agra, home of the Taj Mahal.

The hospice, which has centres in Birmingham, Walsall and Worcester, hopes to get more people involved. More detail is at www.acorns.org.uk/indiacycle

Signing for Santa Claus

CHILDREN with hearing impediments were invited to Dudley's Merry Hill shopping centre to meet the resident signing Santa.

Pupils from Ashwood Park Primary School, Stourbridge, who all have severe or profound hearing problems, were able to let Father Christmas know what was on their wish list.

Merry Hill marketing manager Kelly Reed said: "We wanted to ensure the children didn't miss out on one of the most enjoyable parts of the festive season, and it was lovely to see them letting Father Christmas know what was on their wish list. Our signing Santa will be at the centre every Wednesday until December 19, so we hope any children in the region with hearing difficulties will come along."

Takeaway plans

PLANS to turn a Dudley shop into a hot food takeaway have been lodged with council chiefs. The plans for the property, in Wolverhampton Street, were submitted by Mohammed Saheed, of Kingswinford.

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Scott brought a concert of two halves to Second City's Town Hall



Scott Matthews

Scott Matthews
Town Hall, Birmingham
ACCLAIMED Wolverhampton musician Scott Matthews played a gig of two halves at Town Hall, Birmingham the first of which was the singer on his own doing acoustic songs.

Scott came on to the stage alone with one of his opening songs being the ballad *Myself Again* from his *What The Night Delivers* album. This set the tone for the night and while Scott is undoubtedly

skilful he really needs to widen his repertoire of sounds and certainly mix them up when it comes to concerts and introduce some upbeat tunes.

Many of his songs are indistinguishable from each other and his often slurring style of singing can make it difficult, no doubt with the exception of his most attentive of fans, to understand the lyrics. His on stage presence also lacks any real charisma and tends to be a little dull unfortunately. This said, his obvious talent as a musician is unquestionable and he threw out a challenge to his appreciative audience to come up with a name for a song which as yet is untitled. For the second half of the concert he was joined on stage by his band for the fuller sounding *The Fool's Fooling Himself* which had a distinct middle Eastern undertone complimented by Scott's high strung and almost ethereal voice.

With the band behind him Scott moved into *Obsession Never Sleeps*. Towards the end of his set he eventually started picking up the tempo to give a great 12-bar blues finish.

Danny Farragher

Ned's Civic reunion proves to be atomic



Jonny Penney back out in front for the Ned's Atomic Dustbin reunion

Ned's Atomic Dustbin, Civic Hall, Wolverhampton

"Wolverhampton Civic Hall, so much to answer for," quipped Ned's Atomic Dustbin singer Jonny Penney as his band turned back the clock 20 years on Saturday for their biggest reunion gig since their early 1990s heyday.

It recalled the era, just before Britpop and grunge, when Britain's youth briefly rocked to the 'Sound of Stourbridge'.

The Neds were back with their original line-up to recreate their breakthrough *Nothing Is Cool* video track by track, to mark its reissue on DVD, at the venue where it was filmed.

BBC radio DJ Steve Lamacq introduced the band, recalling the night two decades before when he reviewed the Neds' triumphant Civic Hall show for the *New Musical Express*.

Downstairs at the Civic was packed with late 30somethings reliving their teens. Many of the male fans have a lot less hair now and greater girths but that didn't stop a considerable contingent from moshing 'down the front', attempting to crowd surf or throwing their plastic pint pots in the air... quite an extravagance if still half-filled with beer.

Ned fans had travelled from Japan, Australia and America, as well as from Stourbridge, and were nicely warmed up by 90s funk-rockers and former John Peel favourites Cud with their *Purple Love Balloon*.

From the moment Penney pogoed into action for *Aim* it was party time. The band's twin-bass and clattering slacker rhythm sounded as good now as it did back in the day.

Other highlights included Grey Cell Green and a rousing, rollicking *Kill Your Television*.

As Jonny Penney said afterwards, the gig was "an absolute belter".

Leon Burakowski

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FOR TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Scheme launched to keep residents warm this winter

Dudley Council has launched a winter warmth support scheme to keep borough residents warm and well in their homes this winter.

The winter warmth scheme is being managed by the council, working in partnership with other local organisations including NHS Dudley, Age UK, and Dudley Council for Voluntary Services (DCVS). It aims to keep people who may be struggling to keep warm at home, cosy and snug, through the range of assistance available.

The scheme provides a variety of practical hand-on support, information and expert advice to help people keep their homes and themselves warm this winter.

Anyone concerned about keeping their home warm, struggling with paying their fuel bills or worried about keeping well at home during the

heating measures are also available, such as portable heaters, blankets, hot water bottles and even warm clothing.

The scheme will also arrange for local volunteers to make regular 'befriending' checks on people who may be at risk of becoming isolated during cold weather. They can also help out with shopping trips, collecting prescriptions, dog walking or helping with transport, if needed.

Last year's winter warmth support scheme helped almost 250 households to keep warm. Portable heaters, blankets and hotwater bottles were provided through crisis funding, people were assisted with their energy debts, and helped to switch to the best energy supplier and tariff for their circumstances.

winter can ask for help from the scheme.

All sorts of help can be provided from expert advice on paying fuel bills, help with energy debt, assistance with home energy efficiency improvements and grants and help accessing warm homes discount funds. Emergency crisis

Residents were also helped with applications to the warm homes discount (which helps people with their winter fuel bills) and to energy trust funds.

The winter warmth support helpline is 01384 817086.



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Don't risk your health this winter, our winter warmth fund is here to help, we want people to keep warm, snug and well.

Winter warmth provides free practical support and advice to keep you and your home warm. Things like help with paying fuel bills, energy efficiency grants, emergency heaters, even support for older people struggling to get out.

If you or anyone you know may be at risk of getting cold this winter, please give us a call.

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NEWS

MP backing villagers in fight over homes bid

AN MP has joined the campaign to block controversial plans to build 175 properties on part of the 350-acre Hagley Hall estate, near Stourbridge. Villagers have criticised the idea.

Sajid David has spoken out about the proposals for land bordered by the A456 Kidderminster Road and the A491 Stourbridge Road. The MP, whose Bromsgrove constituency includes Hagley, said he feared, like residents, that the development could alter the character of the village.

Residents are concerned the influx of new families would push village services, including schools, beyond breaking point.

In an open letter, Mr Jarvid said: "I have been contacted over the previous months by many Hagley residents with regard to the proposed Cala Homes development in Hagley."

"The strength of local feeling on this issue has been

by Heather Large

made very clear to me. I do not support this proposed development. The scale of the proposals raises many questions, such as the impact on local infrastructure and services, the resultant noise and pollution and the affect on local wildlife."

Cala Homes regional managing director Darren Humphreys said the region faced a major housing shortage.

He said the firm would spend around £1.7 million to pay for improvements to roads and boost education.

The plans are expected to go to Bromsgrove District Council next month after a decision was delayed for impact assessment reports.

Charity finds homes for 23 cats

HALESOWEN Cat Protection found homes for 23 cats and kittens during its successful rehoming Day. Joy Tomkins and Jeanette Hill run the organisation which had 47 cats and kittens to rehome.

Sisters in tune to aid heart charity



Sophie Harris and sister Daisy with their new CD

A SCHOOLGIRL from Pensnett has put together a CD which has raised more than £100 for charity. Sophie Harris, aged 13, held auditions through her Facebook page for other singers to star on the recording titled *Keep The Beat*.

It features six songs and has raised £103 for the British Heart Foundation. The Kingswinford School pupil said: "I recorded it a couple of months ago. The idea for this was to get some other people on a CD with me and then it developed to make money for charity in the process."

"I auditioned people through my Facebook page and got 60 videos and chose three and there are five people including myself." Her sister Daisy, aged seven, Jessica Powell, Rebecca Ingram and Chloe Smith feature.

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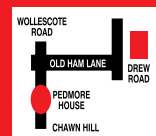
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What's On! Halesowen

Choir is heralding start of Christmas

A CHURCH and a choir will join forces on Sunday to celebrate Christmas.

Halesowen Choral Society will sing at Overend Methodist Church, Banners Lane, Cradley, at an advent service at 6pm.

Overend Methodist Church will also hold its traditional carol service on December 23 at 6pm.

Dudley Salvation Army band will play in Halesowen this weekend.

They will hold a concert at St Paul's Advent Concert in Blackheath on Saturday at 7pm at the Long Lane church.

Mayor to attend civic carol service

DUDLEY Council has organised the annual civic carol service on December 20.

Mayor, Councillor Melvyn Mottram, will be at the service at Christ Church, Coseley, from 7.30pm.

Dudley Young Voices, VTime and In Sound Company choirs will be helping raise the roof, while the service will be led by Reverend Heather Humphrey.

Refreshments will be served at Christ Church-Cole Primary School hall, following the service.

Singing duo at pub

SINGING duo Side by Side top will perform on Saturday night at the Knights Quest pub, Blackheath High Street. Entrance is £3.

Electronic rocker is ready to make his fans electric

THE influential Gary Numan is in concert at Wolverhampton's Wulfrun Hall tonight (Thursday) on his Dead Moon Falling Tour.



Gary Numan

Originally emerging from the 1970s London punk scene, Numan was part of the electronic movement that blossomed in the 1980s with The Human League and Soft Cell. Numan himself was inspired by David Bowie and German electronic pioneers Kraftwerk.

Numan's early hits included Cars and Are Friends Electric? But he is not an artist who is stuck in the past, he went through a reinvention almost as radical as fellow 80s electronic act Depeche Mode and became a major influence on the goth rock scene, inspiring artists as diverse as Marilyn Manson and Lady Gaga.

Tonight he will unveil songs from forthcoming album Splinter with new versions of songs from 2011's Dead Moon Rising album.

War of the Worlds returns

GARY Barlow's hit cover version of Forever Autumn from the 'New Generation' album of Jeff Wayne's Musical Version of The War Of The Worlds has put the spotlight back on the spectacular arena musical.

Wayne will be conducting his orchestra and avoiding being crushed by a giant alien killing machine when the show returns to Birmingham NIA tomorrow night (Friday). The cast includes Jason Donovan, Marti Pellow, Kerry Ellis and Ricky Wilson from the Kaiser Chiefs. Actor Liam Neeson will appear in 3D hologram form as The Journalist.

A Grand night out for granny too



Feathers will fly - Sherrie Hewson meets Orville and Keith Harris as they prepare for Grand panto Jack and the Beanstalk

THE CHRONICLE has teamed up with Grannynet, the community website for grandmothers, and Wolverhampton Grand Theatre to offer one lucky reader five tickets so all the family can enjoy spectacular panto Jack and the Beanstalk, starring Sherrie Hewson, of Benidorm and Coronation Street.

At www.grannynet.co.uk, grannies are being asked to sit down with their grandchildren to discuss what the most important things about Christmas are, such as families getting together.

For your chance to win tickets to Jack and the Beanstalk at the Grand on Sunday, January 6, at 2pm, tell us which top TV soap Sherrie Hewson and her panto co-star Ken Morley used to feature in.

Send your answer on a postcard with your name, address and contact number to Panto Competition, Chronicle Series, Editorial, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton WV1 1ES. The closing date is Friday, December 14. Usual rules apply and the editor's decision is final.

Jack And The Beanstalk, featuring Niki Evans as The Fairy and Nigel Ellacott as The Dame, is at the Lichfield Street theatre from Saturday (December 8) to January 20. To book tickets call the box office on 01902 429212 or visit www.grandtheatre.co.uk



Magical tales from inside wardrobe

DUDLEY Little Theatre Company is presenting the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe from Wednesday, until Saturday, December 8 at Netherton Arts Centre, Northfield Road.

The adaptation of the well loved tale of good and evil takes the audience on a magical mystery tour of the land of Narnia with four children, Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy, who stumble into this strange land through the wardrobe.

Tickets are available from 01384 872583

Players coming to the warehouse

BANJO, mandolin and guitar players will be taking part in a Christmas show in Stourbridge.

The Midlands Fretted Orchestra will be at The Bonded Warehouse, Canal Street on December 8.

The musicians are promising festive favourites and traditional carols. Director Danielle Saxon Reeves from Stourbridge said: "The evening promises a host of seasonal favourites."

Sound of Motown

ROY G Hemmings' multi-award winning Motown & Philadelphia Tour will perform at Dudley Town Hall with on Saturday at 7.30pm.

The show includes hits by Candi Staton, The Stylistics, The Supremes and The Temptations. Tickets cost £21.

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Dermot O'Leary

The X Factor ITV1, 8pm

When Ella Henderson was voted off the show on November 18, millions of fans around the country gasped in disbelief. The shockwaves from her departure proved that nobody is safe in Simon Cowell's juggernaut of a talent search. Now the real questions are: how are the producers going to make a glorified sing-off drag on for so long? Can we get through the finale without anyone using the sentence 'My act has been on a real journey'? And will Dermot O'Leary give us one final dance of the series before the set is packed up for another year?

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Baking Made Easy. (R) **12.00** BBC News. Regional News; Weather. **12.15** Football Focus. **1.00** Live Snooker: UK Championship. The opening session of the second semi-final. **4.30** Final Score. **5.10** BBC News; Regional News; Weather. **5.30** A Question of Sport.

6.00 **Pointless Celebrities.** Kerry Katona, Kim Woodburn, Edwina Currie, Diane Abbott, Dave Spikay, Jane McDonald, Lizo Mzimba and Ellie Crisell are the famous faces taking part in the general knowledge quiz.

6.50 **Strictly Come Dancing.** Bruce Forsyth and Tess Daly present as the final six celebrities demonstrate their best moves in a bid to avoid the dreaded dance-off and make it through to next week's semi-final. The results are tomorrow at 7pm.

7.55 **Merlin.** Morgana takes desperate measures to find Emrys.

8.40 **The National Lottery Awards 2012.** Ceremony celebrating the work of 21 National Lottery-funded projects.

9.20 **Casualty.** Tazmin's career is jeopardised when the ex-footballer whose neck she failed to immobilise sees the Ambulance Trust. Dominic and Tom come to blows over a patient's treatment.

10.10 BBC News; Weather.

10.30 **Match of the Day.** Including Sunderland v Chelsea; National Lottery Update.

11.50 **The Football League Show.** Highlights of today's games in the Championship, League One and League Two.

1.05 Weatherview. **1.10** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 CBeebies. **12.00** The Sky at Night. (R) **12.20** Coast. (R) **12.40** Film: Carefree. (1938) Musical comedy, starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. **2.05** Film: Bucket. (1964) Historical drama, starring Richard Burton and Peter O'Toole.

4.30 Live Snooker: UK Championship. **5.30** Flog It! (R)

6.30 **Dad's Army.** Mainwaring finds a German pilot trapped on top of the town clock by his parachute, so the platoon attempts a rescue mission. Classic comedy, starring Arthur Lowe. (R)

7.00 **Live Snooker: UK Championship.** Coverage of the second and concluding session of the second semi-final at the Barbican Centre in York, where a maximum of nine frames are scheduled to take place. Subsequent programmes subject to change.

10.00 **QI XL.** Stephen Fry hosts an extended version of the quiz, featuring Professor Brian Cox, Rhys Darby, Jason Manford and Alan Davies answering questions on the topic of justice.

10.45 **Led Zeppelin Live in London 2007: Celebration Day.** The band's one-off reunion performance at London's O2 as part of a benefit concert to commemorate the life of Atlantic Records co-founder Ahmet Ertegun.

11.45 Film: **The Relic.** (1997) A biologist and a detective angle with an ancient Amazonian beast stalking Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History. Horror, with Penelope Ann Miller, Tom Sizemore and Linda Hunt.

1.30 Film: Day of the Dead. (1985) **3.05** Close.

ITV1

6.00 CITV: Babar and the Adventures of Badou. **6.10** Babar and the Adventures of Badou. (R) **6.25** The Hive. (R) **6.35** The Hive. (R) **6.45** The Hive. (R) **6.50** Animals. (R) **7.00** Animals. (R) **7.05** The Avengers. **7.25** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.40** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.50** Horrid Henry. (R) **8.00** Horrid Henry. (R) **8.15** Horrid Henry. (R) **8.30** Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **9.25** TV News. **9.30** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. **10.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. **11.20** Film: Columbo: Requiem for a Falling Star. (1973) **12.50** TV News; Weather. **1.05** All Star Family Fortunes. (R) **1.50** Holiday Home Sweet Home. **2.50** Holiday Home Sweet Home. **3.55** Film: Back to the Future. (1985)

6.00 **Regional Programme;** Weather.

6.15 **ITV News;** Weather.

6.30 **New You've Been Framed!** A fresh selection of comical clips.

7.00 **The McFly Show.** The pop group perform some of their biggest hits, joined by celebrity guests including comedian Al Murray and Coronation Street star Michelle Keegan (Tina McIntyre).

8.00 **The X Factor.** The three remaining acts battle it out in part one of the live final.

10.00 Film: **The Invention of Lying.** (2009) Premiere. Comedy, starring Ricky Gervais.

11.05 **ITV News;** Weather.

11.20 Film: **The Invention of Lying.** (2009) Premiere. Concluded.

12.05 **The Store;** ITV News Headlines. **2.10** In Plain Sight. (R) **2.55** ITV Nightscreen. **5.30** ITV Morning News.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 The Hoobs. (R) **6.35** The Hoobs. (R) **7.00** Beach Volleyball. (R) **7.55** The Morning Line. **8.55** T4: According to Jim. (R) **9.25** T4: The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.15** T4: The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.45** T4: The Big Bang Theory. (R) **1.20** T4: The Simpsons. (R) **1.50** Channel 4 Racing. **3.55** The Simpsons. (R) **4.20** Come Dine with Me: Ireland. **4.55** Come Dine with Me: Ireland. **5.55** Come Dine with Me: Ireland. **6.25** **Come Dine with Me:** Ireland. Collette McGahern hosts the final dinner party in Cavan and Monaghan.

6.55 **Channel 4 News.**

7.25 **4thought.tv.** A woman who was attacked for being Jewish.

7.30 **Heston's Fantastical Food.** Heston Blumenthal aims to rekindle people's love of traditional pub food by building a giant pie and transforming it into a fully functioning public house in Wales. (R)

8.30 **Stephen Fry: Gadget Man.** Technology to make work easier and more enjoyable. (R)

9.00 Film: **Predators.** (2010) Premiere. Hardened fighters from across the globe are taken to an alien jungle planet to become prey in a big-game hunt. Sci-fi thriller sequel, with Adrien Brody.

11.15 Film: **30 Days of Night.** (2007) Horror, starring Josh Hartnett.

1.20 Film: **The Girl Next Door.** (2004) **3.10** Hollyoaks. **5.15** Countdown. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00** Power Rangers: Super Samurai. **10.35** ThunderCats. **11.10** The Gadjet Show. (R) **12.10** Chris Tarrant: Extreme Railways. (R) **1.10** Film: Superman II. (1980) Comic-strip adventure sequel, with Christopher Reeve. **3.40** Film: Annie Claus Is Coming to Town. (2011) Premiere. Christmas fantasy, starring Maria Thayer and Sam Page. **5.25** Film: Single Santa Seeks Mrs Claus. (2004) The son of Father Christmas is looking for a wife, just as the son of a single mother is writing to Santa to ask for a new dad. Comedy, with Crystal Bernard and Steve Gutterberg.

7.10 Film: **A Grandpa for Christmas.** (2007) An elderly actor unexpectedly ends up caring for his grand-daughter over Christmas and helping her with a school pageant. Family comedy, with Ernest Borgnine and Juliette Goglia.

8.50 **5 News Weekend.**

8.55 **Tommy Cooper's Christmas Special.** Festive edition of the comic magician's show from 1974, featuring music by Dana and Vic Damone and a guest appearance by French puppeteer Andre Tahon. (R)

10.00 **Live International Boxing.** James DeGale v Fulgencio Zuniga. Mark Pougatch presents coverage of the bout for the WBC Silver Super Middleweight title, held at the Bonus Arena in Hull.

12.00 **SuperCasino.** Live interactive gaming. **4.00** Michaela's Wild Challenge. Ellie Harrison tries to outpace a cartwheeling spider. (R) **4.25** Great Artists. (R) **4.50** County Secrets. (R) **5.05** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.15** The Milkshake! Show. (R) **5.40** Thomas & Friends. (R) **5.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three

7.00 England's Worst Ever Football team. **8.00** Top Gear Bolivia Special. **9.15** Russell Howard's Good News Extra. **10.00** Film: Die Hard with a Vengeance (1995) Action thriller sequel, with Bruce Willis, Samuel L. Jackson and Jeremy Irons.

BBC Four

7.00 Natural World: The Himalayas. **8.00** David Attenborough's First Life. **9.00** The Killing III. **11.30** More Old Jews Telling Jokes. **11.00** Voyager: To the Final Frontier

ITV2

3.45 The Xtra Factor. **7.50** Film: Kindergarten Cop (1990) **10.00** The Xtra Factor. **11.20** Lemon La Vida Loca: Merry Keithmas! Part 1

ITV3

3.55 A Touch of Frost. **5.55** Murder, She Wrote. **7.00** Rosemary & Thyme. **8.00** Foyle's War. **10.00** Bomb Girls. **11.00** A Touch of Frost

ITV4

12.45 Live Tennis: The Stailat Masters. **5.00** Cheers. **5.30** Film: Bend of the River (1952) **7.25** The Sweeney. **8.30** Live Tennis: The Stailat Masters. **10.00** Film: The Black Windmill (1974) Spy thriller, starring Michael Caine, John Vernon, Janet Suzman, Donald Pleasence, Delphine Seyrig and Joss Ackland.

E4

5.35 How I Met Your Mother. **6.30** The Big Bang Theory. **8.00** Rules of Engagement. **9.00** Derren Brown: The Guilt Trip. **10.00** Film: Scary Movie 2 (2001) **11.40** The Big Bang Theory

Film4

3.20 Carry On Doctor (1967) **5.15** The Nativity Story (2006) **7.10** Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer (2007) **9.00** The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (2008) Fantasy drama, starring Brad Pitt.

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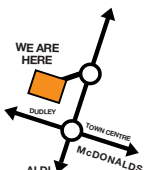
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What's On!

SUNDAY'S TV 9.12.12

Listings supplied by Press Association

CHOICE



Dan Snow

Rome's Lost Empire
BBC1, 8.40pm

You've got to hand it to archaeologists – they know how to get their hands dirty. Come rain or shine, they're happy to spend their days digging around in a muddy trench so that we can better understand the world in which our forebears lived. Sarah Parcak, though, is what's known as a 'space archaeologist', using the latest satellite technology to gain views of the landscape which would otherwise be impossible. In this documentary, Dan Snow joins the scientist on a mission to identify and track down lost cities, amphitheatres and forts.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.40** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Fern Britton Meets Frank Bruno. **11.00** Sunday Politics: Weather for the Week Ahead. **12.20** Countryfile. (R) **1.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **2.00** Helicopter Heroes. (R) **2.30** Escape to the Country. (R) **3.30** Call the Midwife. (R) **4.30** Songs of Praise. **5.05** Nigel Slater's Dish of the Day. (R) **5.35** BBC News: Regional News; Weather.

6.00 Countryfile. Julia Bradbury visits the National Arboretum in Gloucestershire and John Craven is on the trail of English truffles. Plus, the increase in tree diseases crossing the Channel. Including Weather for the Week Ahead.

7.00 Strictly Come Dancing: The Results. Six become five and Michael Buble performs.

7.40 Antiques Roadshow. The team travels to Wightwick Manor near Wolverhampton.

8.40 Rome's Lost Empire. Dan Snow uses satellite technology to reveal the secrets of ancient Rome, tracking down lost cities, amphitheatres and forts with the help of archaeologist Sarah Parcak.

10.00 BBC News: Regional News; Weather.

10.25 Match of the Day 2. Including Manchester City v Manchester United.

11.35 The Graham Norton Show. With Daniel Radcliffe, Jessica Ennis and Bruno Mars. (R)

12.20 Film: Annapolis. (2006). **1.55** Weatherview. **2.00** Sign Zone: Film 2012. (R) **2.30** Holly City. (R) **3.30** Paul Martin's Handmade Revolution. (R) **4.15** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 CBeebies. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.30** Nigella's Christmas Kitchen. (R) **12.00** Live Athletics. **1.45** Ray Reardon at 80. (R) **2.15** Live Snooker: UK Championship.

6.00 Flog It! Experts Michael Baggot and Adam Partridge visit Blackburn in Lancashire, and Paul Martin discovers the story behind a group of local dialect poets. (R)

6.20 Fawcett Towers. A married couple, both doctors, check in and become intrigued by the behaviour of manic manager Basil, who feels sure a male guest has smuggled a girl into his room. (R)

7.00 The Most Courageous Raid of WWII. Paddy Ashdown tells the story of the "Cockleshell Heroes", the Royal Marine commandos who in 1942 launched an attack on enemy shipping in Bordeaux harbour. (R)

8.00 Live Snooker: UK Championship. Hazel Irvine introduces coverage of the second and concluding session of the final at the Barbican Centre in York, where a maximum of 11 frames are scheduled to take place.

11.00 Never Mind the Buzzcocks. Expands star Stephen Mangan takes over hosting duties on the quiz, with Kayvan Novak and Michelle Heaton among the guests, joining team captains Noel Fielding and Phill Jupitus. (R)

11.30 Film: Keeping Up with the Steins. (2006) Comedy, with Daryl Sabara, Jami Gertz and Cheryl Hines.

12.50 BBC News. **4.00** Close.

ITV1

6.00 CITV: Engie Benji. **6.10** Babar and the Adventures of Badou. (R) **6.25** Babar and the Adventures of Badou. (R) **6.35** Sign Stories. (R) **6.45** Animals. (R) **6.55** Animals. (R) **7.00** Fleabag Monkeyface. (R) **7.15** Fleabag Monkeyface. (R) **7.25** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.35** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.50** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **8.00** Big Time Rush. **8.30** Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **9.25** There's No Taste Like Home. (R) **10.25** Dinner Date. (R) **11.25** Dickinson's Real Deal. (R) **12.30** Film: Carry On Up the Jungle. (1970) **2.15** The X Factor. (R) **4.15** Midsomer Murders. (R) **6.15** Regional Programme; Weather.

6.25 ITV News; Weather.

6.45 Celebrity Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? Pantomime Special. With Denise Welch, David Hasselhoff, Cheryl Fergison, Tim Vine, John Partridge and Alison Hammond.

7.40 The X Factor Results. With part one of the final behind them, this is the last chance for the two remaining acts to impress the public in the race to become this year's winner.

9.40 Rod Stewart's Christmas. The rock star performs his favourite festive songs at Stirling Castle and collaborates with Michael Buble and Kylie Minogue.

10.55 ITV News; Weather.

11.15 Film: Nutty Professor II: The Klumps. (2000) Comedy sequel, starring Eddie Murphy.

1.05 The Story: ITV News Headlines. **2.55** Motorsport UK. **3.45** ITV Nightseries. **5.30** ITV Morning News.

CHANNEL 4

6.00 Sail Mail. (R) **6.05** The Treacle People. (R) **6.15** The Hoobs. (R) **6.45** The Hoobs. (R) **7.10** The Great Ethiopian Run. **8.05** Will & Grace. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.05** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.35** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **1.05** The Simpsons. (R) **1.40** Hugh's 3 Good Things. **2.10** Hugh's 3 Good Things. **3.20** Hugh's 3 Good Things. **3.55** Hugh's 3 Good Things. **4.25** Deal or No Deal. **5.20** Film: Elf. (2003)

7.20 Channel 4 News.

7.50 4thought.tv. A short film in which a member of the public reflects on whether Jews are still persecuted in Britain today.

7.55 The Political Slot.

8.00 How the Bismarck Sank HMS Hood. David Mearns and Innes McCartney search the wreck of HMS Hood for clues as to why the battlecruiser sank so quickly after being attacked by German battleship Bismarck in May 1941.

9.00 Homeland. Saul catches up with an old friend and discovers evidence of covert activities by Estes, while Brody and Walden are at odds over the future of their political relationship.

10.00 Peep Show. Mark thinks Simon is trying to get back together with Dobby.

10.30 Film: GI Joe: The Rise of Cobra. (2009) Action adventure, starring Channing Tatum, Sienna Miller and Christopher Eccleston.

12.45 American Football Live. **4.45** Grudge Match. (R) **4.55** Countdown. (R) **5.40** Make Do & Mend. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! Peppa Pig. **6.05** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **6.15** Fifi and the Flowerbuds. (R) **6.25** Bert and Ernie's Great Adventures. (R) **6.30** The Mr Men Show. (R) **6.45** Olive the Ostrich. **6.50** Abby's Flying Fairy School. (R) **7.00** Roobarb and Custard Too. (R) **7.05** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **7.20** Animal Antics. (R) **7.25** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.40** City of Friends. (R) **7.50** Castle Farm. (R) **7.55** Little Princess. (R) **8.10** The Adventures of Bottle Top Bill and His Best Friend Corky. (R) **8.25** Angelina Ballerina. **8.40** Rupert Bear. (R) **9.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.15** Toby's Travelling Circus. (R) **9.30** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **9.40** Jelly Jam. (R) **10.00** Power Rangers: Super Samurai. **10.35** ThunderCats. **11.10** Meals in Moments. (R) **11.20** Highland Emergency. (R) **11.50** Film: Jack Frost. (1998) **1.45** Film: Grounded. (2006) **3.30** Film: Superman III. (1983)

6.05 5 News Weekend.

6.10 Film: The Dirty Dozen. (1967) Twelve convicts are sent on a mission to destroy a French chateau being used as a German military base. Second World War action adventure, starring Lee Remick, Marvin and Telly Savalas.

9.00 Film: The Expendables. (2010) Premiere. Action thriller, directed by and starring Sylvester Stallone. With Jason Statham.

11.05 Film: Full Metal Jacket. (1987) Vietnam War drama, starring Matthew Modine.

1.25 SuperCasino. **4.00** House Doctor. (R) **4.50** County Secrets. (R) **5.00** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.10** The Milkshake! Show. (R) **5.35** Thomas & Friends. (R) **5.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

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BBC Three
7.00 Top Gear **8.00** The Premier League's Most Amazing Moments **9.00** Sun, Sex and Suspicious Parents **10.00** Him & Her **10.30** American Dad! **11.15** Family Guy

BBC Four
8.00 Hicote: A Garden for All Seasons **8.00** African Railway **9.00** The Trouble with Aid **11.00** The Debate **11.45** Hicote: A Garden for All Seasons

ITV2
3.00 Film: The Little Vampire (2000) **4.55** Film: Uncle Buck (1989) **6.55** Film: Hulk (2003) Comic-strip adventure, starring Eric Bana. **9.40** The Xtra Factor **11.00** Film: Hot Fuzz (2007)

ITV3
2.50 Film: The Nun's Story (1959) **5.50** The Return of Sherlock Holmes **7.00** Lewis. A professor is killed on Halloween. Last in the series. **9.00** Midsomer Murders **11.00** Ghostboat

ITV4
4.30 Police, Camera, Action! **5.00** Live Tennis. The Stail Masters. **8.00** River Monsters **9.00** Film: The Quest (1996) Action adventure, starring Jean-Claude Van Damme. **11.00** Film: On Deadly Ground (1994)

3.40 The Big Bang Theory **8.00** Film: The Day the Earth Stood Still (2008) **10.00** Misfits **11.00** The Inbetweeners

Film4
2.45 The Family Stone (2005) **4.50** Local Hero (1983) **7.05** Failure to Launch (2006) Romantic comedy, with Sarah Jessica Parker and Matthew McConaughey. **9.00** Alien Resurrection (1987) Sci-fi thriller sequel, starring Sigourney Weaver. **11.10** Chain Reaction (1996)

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What's On!

Film Choices

MONDAY

Mr & Mrs Smith, Channel 5, 9pm

An outwardly bored suburban couple, who lead double lives as professional assassins, are hired to kill one another – a situation that puts some much-needed excitement back into their stale relationship. Comedy adventure, starring Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie. (2005)

Mercury Rising, ITV1, 10.35pm

A top-secret government agency has developed a seemingly unbreakable code – only for an autistic boy to crack it in an instant. Assassins succeed in gunning down his parents, but a maverick FBI agent investigating their deaths finds the child hiding in a closet, and resolves to shield him from the hitmen on his trail. Thriller, starring Bruce Willis. (1998)

TUESDAY

A Simple Plan, BBC1, 11.50pm

Two brothers and a friend stumble on a fortune in unmarked small dollar bills in the wreckage of a plane and decide to squirrel it away for themselves. However, the strain of keeping the cache secret takes its toll as guilt, paranoia and greed change their relationship for ever. Sam Raimi's psychological thriller, starring Bill Paxton and Billy Bob Thornton. (1998)



The Expendables, Wednesday, Channel 5, 10pm

WEDNESDAY

The Expendables, Channel 5, 10pm

A mercenary leads his elite team on a mission to assassinate a South American dictator, only to find their target is merely a pawn and the real power in the country is a rogue CIA agent. Feeling they have been double-crossed, they abandon the operation – but are compelled to return and save a captured rebel. Action thriller, directed by and starring Sylvester Stallone. (2010)

THURSDAY

The Bounty Hunter, Channel 4, 1.05pm

A professional manhunter searches for three murderous train robbers who have taken cover in a backwoods town, but is unable to identify the killers among the community's residents. Meanwhile, the fugitives are aware of his arrival, and tensions begin to rise. Western, starring Randolph Scott and Ernest Borgnine. (1954)

FRIDAY

Hard Target, ITV1, 11.10pm

A woman searching for her missing father hires an out-of-work merchant sailor to guide her through the streets of New Orleans, where his martial arts skills are greatly tested in a series of encounters with sadistic hunters of human prey. John Woo's action thriller, starring Jean-Claude Van Damme and Wilford Brimley. (1993)

Pick of the Week

Hopefuls aim to shine as a new star is born

On Saturday, August 18, 2012, a few million hearts sank. The X Factor was back, which meant summer was over, and by the time the series finished, Christmas would almost be on us.

Did we really need another three-and-a-half month talent search looking for the next One Direction or Leona Lewis? Did we have to put up with 18 weekends dominated by the show which dominated primetime Saturdays and Sundays on ITV?

Some people thought we didn't, because the show launched with the lowest ratings since 2006, and later started losing viewers to rival show Strictly Come Dancing. Yes, despite the millions of pounds Simon Cowell and ITV pumped into the show, a modest public-funded show featuring an 84-year-old host gave The X Factor a good run for its money.

To paraphrase Bruce Forsyth, didn't Strictly do well?

But if familiarity had bred contempt, there was no denying TXF's class of 2012 did a great job of making up for the ad breaks and Dermot O'Leary hurrying the judges for an answer on

Sunday nights (despite having padded out the results show for the past 55 minutes).

Thousands of wannabe stars entered the auditions stage between May 23 and June 25, but only 211 reached boot camp. The shortlist was eventually whittled down to 13 finalists. Carolynne Poole, Melanie Masson, MK1 and Jade Ellis were voted out in the first four weeks, while Lucy Spraggan dropped out in week five due to ill health.

That same week we also said goodbye to Kye Sones, who failed to win over the masses, and by week six, boy band District 3 were shown the door.

When Ella Henderson was voted off the show on November 18, millions of fans around the country gasped in disbelief.

The 16-year-old had belted out the performance of her life on the show a day earlier, and it looked like she was a dead cert to either win TXF, or at least make it through to this final. How wrong we all were.

The pride of Grimsby graciously admitted defeat, while Tulisa struggled

to come to terms with what had just happened.

That left Union J, Christopher Maloney, Jahmene Douglas, Rylan Clark (voted out on November 25) and James Arthur.

Now the real questions are: how are the producers going to make a glorified sing-off between three people last two hours?

Can we get through the Manchester-based finale without any judge using the phrase "My act has been on a real journey"?

And will Dermot give us one last dance of the series before the set is packed up for another year?

All shall be revealed as Tulisa, Gary Barlow, Louis Walsh and Nicole Scherzinger take to the stage, while I'm A Celebrity... bosses consider what trials they could put Rylan through next year if he decamps to the jungle.

Whatever happens, it should be 'Jahmazing' – as long as you pre-record the first hour, fast-forward through the recaps, and then watch Sunday's results live.



The judges offer their opinion in The X Factor, Saturday, ITV1, 8pm

Best of the Rest

MONDAY

The All New Gadget Show, Channel 5, 8pm

Jason Bradbury and Pollyanna Woodward are in a rather unique Marseille hotel where every room is an individual bubble hidden in the woods. What better place to try out the latest mini-projectors? The duo are then Cannes-bound in a yellow Ferrari so they can test a range of high-end driving. And if you are lucky enough to be saving one of the world's most sought after cars in one of the planet's most desirable locations, you may as well stop off in St Tropez to take a few snaps. Of course, these aren't any old photos. They are taken with digital single-lens reflex cameras. Nice work if you can get it.

The Poison Tree, ITV1, 9pm

After appearing in White Heat earlier this year, MyAnna Buring takes the lead role in this new two-part thriller, which also takes place in two different time frames. In the present day, Karen Clarke (Buring) is waiting for her partner Rex (Matthew Goode) to be released from prison after serving a 12-year prison sentence so they and their 11-year-old daughter can finally become a family. We also flash back to the summer of 1999, when student Karen meets Rex and his glamorous sister Biba (Ophelia Lovibond) and finds herself caught up in their hedonistic party lifestyle. However, the relationships between the trio become increasingly intense and tangled, setting the scene for tragedy and murder.

TUESDAY

Is Our Weather Getting Worse?, Channel 4, 8pm

It's an age-old joke that we Brits do nothing but gripe about the weather, but this year, we've certainly been given reason to complain. We were gripped by unrelenting drought at the beginning of the year, a time which saw hopepans and our wildlife was almost on the verge of environmental disaster. But come April, violent storms brought about the wettest summer on record for 100 years, and the headlines and TV news bulletins were awash with the dramatic toll it had taken on our battered country. This programme explores the past 12 months of unpredictable weather through use of dramatic archive footage, expert interviews and cutting-edge graphics.

WEDNESDAY

Chris Tarrant: Extreme Railways, Channel 5, 9pm

Chris Tarrant is exceptionally passionate about this week's episode when he discovers the wonders of Australia. "We went from Adelaide right down the bottom right the way up to Darwin, so literally we went right up the continent," he explains, still jet lagged. "We started off with a quite elegant new train, and then at one point we had to get on a steam train, which was quite fun, because I'm loading the furnace with coal. B****y hard

work!" Tarrant and the small production crew then 'got a four-wheeled drive and took a 'bouncy light aircraft', then arrived at Alice Springs, where they were supposed to get a nice train to do the last bit. However, not everything went to plan.

British Comedy Awards 2012, Channel 4, 9pm

This year, the nation has been more interested in feeling all patriotic than having a massive laugh, but that's not to say that we haven't enjoyed ourselves in between feeling all misty-eyed about our nation while celebrating the Queen's diamond jubilee and supporting the UK's athletes as they went for gold at the Olympics. Perhaps to reflect the jingoistic nature of 2012, it

would be fitting if BBC Four's sitcom Twenty Twelve retained the title of Best Sitcom it won last year. Other successful programmes and personalities in 2011 included Shooting Stars, Darren Boyd and Miranda Hart. But who will follow in their footsteps? Now, that would be telling...

THURSDAY

Young Apprentice, BBC1, 8pm

What will the aspiring Young Apprentices ask

for this Christmas – computer games, a new power suit or the chance to move a step closer to their ultimate goal of world domination? If Santa can't help with the latter request, then maybe Alan Sugar can, as the teens battle it out for a place in the final. To get there, they are going to have to select products to sell at Womad, the world music festival which is attended by almost 40,000 fans. One team hope to clean up with a pedal-powered washing machine, while the others plump for a portable toilet. For the winners, there isn't just a random treat on offer, but a guaranteed place in the final.

FRIDAY

A Night of Heroes – The Military Awards, ITV1, 9pm

London's Imperial War Museum hosts one of the most special awards nights on the calendar. Nicknamed the Millies, it recognises the excellence and sacrifices made by those serving in the British Armed Forces. Philip Schofield and Amanda Holden host the ceremony, while celebrities such as Jeremy Clarkson, Mark Cavendish and Frank Lampard will be in attendance. The identities of this year's winners are being kept a secret for now, but you can bet there won't be a dry eye in the house when they're announced and those involved's amazing stories are told. It may be a cliché on the night, but even those who don't go home with a trophy are winners – there are certainly no losers here.

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Top guide for Dudley, Halesowen, Sedgley, Kidderminster, Stourbridge



Stableford Hall, set in fabulous grounds, has been divided into seven apartments



One of the four spacious bedrooms at the elegant Georgian home

Select hall apartment and live in splendour

AN elegant apartment in prestigious Stableford Hall, some six miles from Bridgnorth, is for sale on a leasehold basis priced at £335,000.

Stableford Hall is a magnificent Georgian property, set within delightful grounds and comprising seven apartments. Accessed via an impressive communal entrance hall, the four bedroom apartment is on the first floor and has a number of period features

including high ceilings, cornicing and fireplaces with marble surrounds.

There is a spacious hallway leading to the drawing room, with a bay window offering fine views over the surrounding grounds.

The good-sized dining room provides good space for entertaining while the well equipped kitchen gives access to a roof terrace at the rear of the property.

The master bedroom is double aspect with views over the lawns and has fitted wardrobes and an en suite

bathroom, and there are three more bedrooms and a family shower room. Stableford Hall is accessed over a gravelled drive leading to a turning circle and beyond to garaging and parking.

The grounds are beautifully maintained with large areas of lawn, well-stocked flower borders and mature trees – and there is a service charge for the hall and grounds of £192.25 per calendar month. For further details contact Strutt & Parker on 01743 284200.



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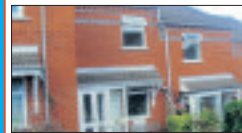
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A ground floor unfurnished flat briefly comprising of: Living Room, Fitted Kitchen with appliances and Breakfast Area, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom with Shower, Double Glazing, Gas Central Heating, Allocated Parking and Garage.

£525 PCM



STOURBRIDGE, PROSPECT GARDENS

Located close to Stourbridge Town Centre, is this unfurnished mid terraced house, comprising of: Two Bedrooms, Fitted Dining Kitchen, Cosy Lounge, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Bathroom with Shower, Small Rear Garden, Parking Space to Front

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Situated In Popular Residential Area Of Halesowen, With Easy Access To Buses To The Town, Is This Part Furnished First Floor Apartment Comprising Of: Two Bedrooms, Lounge, Fitted Kitchen, Bathroom With A Shower, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Garage Parking, Communal Gardens

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An Unfurnished semi detached house, close to local amenities, briefly comprising of: Gas Central Heating, Kitchen, Living Room, Two Bedroom, Bathroom, Front & Rear Gardens, Driveway Parking

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HALESOWEN, MANOR LANE

A furnished flat above shop, briefly comprising of: Gas Central Heating, Living Room, Large Fitted Kitchen, Double Bedroom, Shower Room, Secure Parking

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This lovely unfurnished ground floor apartment, with views over the canal and on a popular development, comprising of: One Bedroom, Spacious Lounge with Patio Doors onto a Private Balcony, Fitted Kitchen with Small Fridge and Washing Machine, Gas Central Heating, Bathroom with Shower, Allocated Parking, Communal Garden

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Your essential guide to the world of motoring compiled by Motoring Editor Sharon Walters

Old faithful Fiesta rides to the rescue in Ford's time of need

FORD is losing shedloads of cash in Europe but is fighting back in the best way it can: building cars people want to buy and the balance sheet will turn from red to black.

By Ian Donaldson

Might take a while, mind you, but if the latest updates to the little Fiesta are anything to go by, at least Ford has set off on the right road (with a pot of gold at the end).

A big seller across Europe, and number one in the UK for months on end, the Fiesta is being given its mid-life revamp while still in the best of health.

That's a good sign. Many cars are given a modest styling tickle, and not much else, even as sales are on the slide. Not the Fiesta.

Easily spotted is the entirely new front, with hints of (whisper it) Aston Martin and a generally proper grown up feel.

Inside, there are flashes of silver and gloss black to add a touch of mature flair but it's under the bonnet where the real story is found.

For, along with already seen petrol and

diesel engines, there's now the choice of three versions of Ford's new, and delightful three-cylinder petrol engine.

It comes in three power outputs and redefines what we can expect from a mere one litre, especially with the two versions employing a turbocharger to add puff.

Tried in its top 123 horsepower guise on the press launch around Rome, the Fiesta instantly proved the sort of car that, rear leg room and boot space apart, makes you wonder why you'd ever need anything else.

Six of the engines, including the trio of three-cylinder units, offered in the new Fiesta put out sufficiently little pollution to forget about road tax or the London congestion charge.

One of the Fiesta diesels promises nearly 86mpg in average running, but you'd need to be a light footed saint to approach that it real world motoring.

More impressive was the 44mpg I saw on a brisk route of mainly motorway and interesting uphill bends on the way to a

view outside Rome. Pulling us along was the most powerful of the new three-cylinder engines and it's eager thrum and delicious pulling power turned the Fiesta into a pocket rocket without the GTI badge.

Turning home (and lunch) the car headed downhill with just as much enthusiasm and sipped petrol to the tune of 55mpg, while still making the car as much fun to drive as the uphill leg.

The version we were trying was the £15,145 Zetec S 1.0T EcoBoost with 123bhp on tap and an official 65.7mpg in the unrealistic official consumption test every new car has to take.

Now for the rest of the upgrades: top of the list is something called MyKey; standard on every car and which lets an owner set limits for speed and sound system volume when handing the Fiesta over to someone else – probably a son or daughter with a new full licence.

To my surprise, there is only one top speed limit available on MyKey in the UK – 80mph, which seems more than enough to get an inexperienced driver into trouble. Ford says the car might need that speed to get out of a critical situation.



A big seller in Europe, the Fiesta has been top of the UK charts for months

This piece of technology also brings speed warnings chimes, an earlier low fuel warning limit and won't switch the radio on without seatbelts buckled up.

Then there's active city stop, fitted to higher grade models and using radar to

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in the company achieving high scores on customer surveys. This family run business of nearly 60 years is justifiably proud of these excellent standards in customer satisfaction, where personal service counts.

Rob Gilbert himself has worked for Vauxhall in Dudley for over 29 years whilst amongst this family run firms other loyal staff, Motability specialist, Tony Lister has over 50 years Vauxhall experience and Trevor Hollies in sales has over 34 years Vauxhall experience!

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Five-goal Rachel Letford takes on the defence

Letford lets fly to go nap in big victory

Gornal Ladies 0 Halesowen Town Ladies 11
HALESOWEN took a while getting going on a sticky pitch but once they did, they rattled in double figures.

Rachel Letford got the first of five goals in the League Cup match with a low shot in off the keeper and then converted a quality cross from Lyndsey Glover.

Sian Whittall scored a brace with Dani Reade and Charlotte Byatt providers.

Halesowen played even better in the second period, tackling well and moving the ball with quick passes.

New signing Shannie Jennings' hat-trick came from cutting in each time and displaying excellent finishing.

Nicola Finlay headed home and Letford scored the goal of the game to round off a good passing movement.

She added her fourth and fifth to complete the scoring. Halesowen manager Scott McKee praised Gornal's "good young footballing side", adding: "I think they played well, but just lacked that bit of quality Halesowen have."

It's high five for Tividale

Tividale 5 Heath Hayes 3
TIVIDALE raced to a 5-1 lead then had to defend desperately for the final five minutes after Heath Hayes snatched two goals back.

But the home side had done enough in this Midland Alliance clash.

Tividale scored twice in as many minutes after the half-hour. First Matt Jukes broke clear and, although Adam Lane saved his shot, Kyle Hill hammered in the rebound. Almost from the restart, Jukes broke free to lob Lane for the second.

Jukes and Jason Chilton made it four in the second half. Leadun Dunleavy reduced the arrears but Kyle Bradey got the fifth before Dave Waple and Brad Grice cut the margin.

Win keeps unbeaten home record intact

Old Halesonians 3 Warwick 1
OLD HALES men's seconds kept an unbeaten home record beating second-placed Warwick.

Hales's Harry Hughes hit the post before deadlock was broken as Matt Harrold netted.

Warwick earned penalty corners repelled by the defender/goal-keeper combination of Nathan Whitehouse and Steve Charlton.

Just before half-time Hales scored through Charles Palmer.

The second half saw Warwick press for possession but Old Hales soaked up the pressure and added a third goal through Chris Hardy.

Old Halesonians hockey

Warwick got a consolation goal in the last couple of minutes, but it wasn't enough to deny Old Hales a well deserved win.

Old Halesonians 2 Bournville 4
The thirds led Bournville, but fell short of the mark.

Goals from Gareth Bayley and Damian Shackleton were not enough in a match which saw the home side lead 1-0 at half-time.

League strugglers Bournville will be pleased with the result while Hales are without a win

since their 8-0 thrashing of Wolverhampton late in October.

Worcester 1 Old Halesonians 2
Second-placed Old Halesonians fourths sit in a promotion spot over the Christmas break after this win.

The first goal came when Nic Penn played the ball in to Craig Bray, whose shot was deflected off a Worcester defender's stick and looped over the goalkeeper into the top corner.

Worcester responded and swiftly got a reward.

Hales' defence gifted possession and a few Worcester passes later, the ball hit the Old Hales' net to make it 1-1.

Worcester continued to pressure and created good chances, but man of the match Ryan Middleton made some important saves to keep the score at 1-1 at half time.

Worcester began the second half as they finished the first and Middleton made another crucial save before Old Hales got the winner.

A clever Old Hales short corner routine saw Phil Carter, at the edge of the D, give the ball back to the passer, Bray, whose run to the

near post allowed him to tap in his second goal.

Droitwich 0 Old Halesonians 4
The fifths dominated in a fixture against a league strugglers Droitwich.

On a cold afternoon, Hales found themselves 2-0 up at the interval following a Jim Gurmin double.

Soon after half-time Fady Jadayel put his name on the score-sheet before Gurmin completed his hat-trick in style to make it 4-0 to the visitors.

Other results: Old Hales Ladies firsts 4 Worcester 5, Old Hales Badgers 1 Barford Tigers 5.

Tash treble gets Halas through to next round

**Ladies League
Rugby Town Ladies 1
Halas Ladies 3**

A TASH BERRY treble saw Halas negotiate round one of the Open Cup safely.

Facing a frosty pitch and a Rugby team out to avenge a league defeat earlier in the season, Halas started well, but Rugby took the lead against the run of play.

However, Halas continued to press and went into the half-time break in the lead after Berry scored twice.

Although Rugby came back into the game in the second half, Berry put the game out of reach with her third after an excellent turn and finish.

**Boys League
Wolverhampton U11 1
Halas Hawks U11 East 2**

Halas U11 East secured only their second win of the season with this victory at Wolverhampton.

A Charlie Greening tap-in from an Oliver Miller shot put Halas one up at the break.

The hosts equalised in the second half, but Harvey Jacobs got the winner late on with his first goal in Halas colours.

Man of the match was shared by Jake Crackett and Zac Kamero.

Halas Hawks U16 6 CCC U16 0
The U16s marched into the third round of the Birmingham County Cup with a resounding victory against CCC from the Central Warwickshire league.

Goals from Dan Willetts (2), Joe Smith (2), Rhys Boswell and a superb strike from Kane Griffiths York saw them progress to meet Wednesbury Rangers next week in round three.

Early goals sink Town

AFC Wulfs 5 Cradley Town 3
THREE goals in the first 12 minutes sunk Cradley's challenge in this West Midlands Premier clash.

Wulfs led in the second minute as Tom Piggott's cross was sliced into his own net by Jack Pearlman. Two minutes later, Jake Sedgemoor scored. James Skedged headed in a corner for 3-0.

Sean Williams' low shot reduced the arrears before Piggott made it 4-1.

Richard Thomas-Robinson hit a 35-yard screamer for Cradley and Matt Bailey stabbed home. But Nathan Rose-Laing's strike ended it.

Albion 0 Stoke City 1

COULD they not have agreed on the outcome beforehand and saved us all a lot of trouble?

That way, we could have all got some Christmas shopping done or, even better, watched England thrash the All Blacks, writes Martin Swain.

Because Albion v Stoke at The Hawthorns is the Groundhog Day of football fixtures, treading the same tedious path each year towards the same conclusion – the Baggies, driven to despair by their failure to break down one of the Premier League's most unforgiving defences, coughing up a late chance from which Tony Pulis' team take all three points.

What will hurt Albion more this time is that a second successive defeat plays into the lobby of opinion which argues that their early-season position is false and cannot possibly be maintained.

Grim

It is up to Steve Clarke and his players to present an argument against that over the next few weeks but, from the peak point of that victory at Sunderland which took the team third, Albion have been outplayed by Swansea and squeezed into submission by this familiar bear hug from the Potteries.

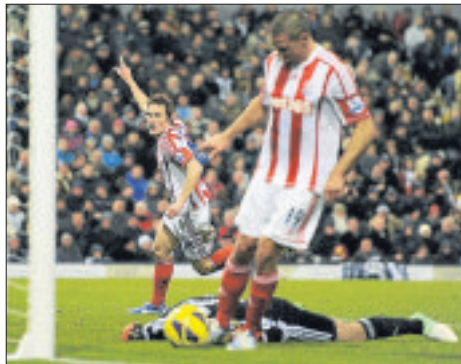
Stoke's game has moved on, thankfully, from the days of the Rory Delap long throw but it is still a grim force of nature and even the best Albion team for more than 30 years could make nothing of it.

For the first time this season, The Hawthorns fans departed having failed to see their team land a punch of any significance on an opposition keeper until Asmir Begovic defied Graham Dorrans from Albion's best effort for an equaliser, seven minutes from the end. It didn't matter what Clarke's men conjured up to that point, Stoke's massed ranks of defiance beat it.

The head coach was right to accentuate the positives of Albion's position after the game.



Albion's Steven Reid, left, does battle with Kenwyne Jones



Stoke's Dean Whitehead celebrates scoring the winning goal

Clarke will also save time for a personal 'debrief' and question the wisdom of the rotations which have back-fired since the Stadium of Light illuminated Albion's profile.

After a couple of changes at Swansea, Clarke opted for six against Stoke. Albion may have a fund of inter-changeable and creative players but against Stoke they never quite found the cohesion and rhythm that is their forte.

The most notable absence was James Morrison, who was given a breather on the bench, offering the under-used Markus Rosenberg a first Premier League start.

You had to feel a little for the Swede – all season he has waited to catch a break and when he does, he's got Ryan Shawcross and Robert Huth waiting for him. It was a difficult game for Rosenberg and not one which will advance his case for future opportunities, especially as Shane Long appeared to spend the game wondering where his regular attacking partner was.

It is difficult to know where Albion's labours end and Stoke's jarhead discipline begins because the wall of red and white shirts that thwarted every advance refuses to be budged from its business.

Even the introduction of Peter Odemwingie, bringing extra pace down one flank and a further capacity for the unexpected amid Stoke's penalty area gridlock, could not do the trick.

And the gamble you take with Odemwingie as a wide player would be a feature in the game's deciding moment – although not the only one.

I wonder what caused Jonas Olsson, Albion's most dependable of defenders, to suffer such a fateful lapse of concentration in the 75th minute.

My money would be on the frustration brought about by Stoke's stubborn tenacity but instead of clearing to Row Z another 'lump it and chase' offering, gamely pursued by Kenwyne Jones, a mithered Olsson tried to keep the ball in play. It was a rash if understandable snap of patience.

Michael Kightly, having advanced beyond Odemwingie in support of Jones, gobbled up the stray clearance and quickly plunked it into an Olsson-free area for Dean Whitehead to sweep home. It was Stoke's only meaningful effort on target all afternoon but one which will continue to justify the unremitting Pulis game plan.

There was time for that one effort from Dorrans and a chance to consider the positives for Albion, the outstanding form of Youssouf Mulumbu and return of Steven Reid among them. But I'd rather have been watching the All Blacks getting flayed.

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Not again
Another Hawthorns
victory for Stoke
Page 35



Goal glut
Letford grabs five
in Ladies' victory
Page 35



Albion's Long not for sale — Clarke

ALBION boss Steve Clarke has laughed off reports of a possible January move for leading scorer Shane Long — and backed Markus Rosenberg to come good for the Baggies.

Clarke played down suggestions that Long could make a big-money switch after Liverpool were linked with a potential bid in the transfer window.

The Ireland international has seven goals this season and has caught the eye with impressive performances.

But Clarke insisted: "Shane is not for sale and I'd be very surprised if Brendan Rodgers wanted to take Shane."

Long's displays this season are certain to have been noticed by the Premier League's big-boys but a bid from Anfield is thought to be unlikely, with Long's Reading career having stuttered under Reds boss Rodgers before Brian McDermott restored him to top form.

Meanwhile, Clarke is confident Sweden international Rosenberg will find his feet in England after a difficult full Premier League debut in Saturday's 1-0 defeat to Stoke.

"He worked hard," said Clarke. "It was a game that was difficult for anyone to shine in. He didn't get many chances. Markus will score goals, for sure, we've no doubt about that."

King is first name listed

SKIPPER Danny King is the first name on Birmingham's team sheet for the 2013 Elite League season.

King will spend a third successive season with the Perry Barr side and will again be captain.

Selco Brummies co-promoter Graham Drury praised the rider, who signed as a full asset from Ipswich in mid-season.

He said: "Danny is a reliable rider. He's popular with his team-mates and popular with the fans, so it was the logical thing to do to bring him back for a third season."

King said: "I'm very pleased. "It's a very well run club with professional management and I am looking forward to another shot at the play-offs."

Birmingham will unveil their new No.1 rider tomorrow, along with a new club partner.

Knight helps Hales rise to university challenge

Warwick University 0 Old Halesonians 2

OLD HALESONIANS men's firsts cemented a Midlands Premier second place for the Christmas break with this win.

They anticipated a difficult game against a side relegated from Midlands Division One last season and Warwick University started more composed, dominating possession early but not troubling keeper Alex Fraser.

Hales remained patient and the game turned as the visitors increased pressure on the students' defence. With time on the ball, Hales strung together good passing moves and created several chances.

The breakthrough came as a penalty

Old Halesonians hockey

corner was saved, but Graham Knight pounced on the rebound to put Hales ahead.

The defensive line stood strong against student attacks and Hales led 1-0 at the interval. The second half started at a similar pace, as both played quality passing hockey.

Warwick University created a few more chances in the second period, with the post coming to Fraser's help on one occasion.

Another shot was cleared off the line by the diving efforts of both Simon Palmer and Ben Hughes. Despite these efforts, Hales were not troubled much more during the

second half, and their strike force again delivered to double the lead.

Chris Hill found the net, giving him five goals in as many games, with a composed finish.

Warwick University were unhappy about an umpiring decision in the build-up, involving midfielder Doug Houghton.

Despite the protests the goal stood, and the home team self-destructed.

One player was sent off following an altercation with the umpire with two others yellow-carded for dissent.

With Hales having a player advantage for long periods following the goal, chances

soon came thick and fast for them. Despite having several opportunities, Old Hales were unable to increase their lead but they maintained control of the game.

Hales continued to put in the effort and legwork for the remaining time on the clock to ease to a 2-0 win. Following the final whistle, the Warwick University captain was shown a red card to make the game one they will soon wish to forget.

Old Hales now have a five-week break before resuming their campaign against the League leaders, Hampton-in-Arden, on January 12.

More hockey — Page 39

Yeltz run comes to an end

**Belper Town 4
Halesowen Town 1**

A FOUR-GOAL blast in the first half put paid to Halesowen Town's hopes of making it four league wins in a row in Derbyshire.

Despite missing players such as Brendan Kelly and Neil Barnfield, the Yeltz started well but missed early chances through Jean-Michel Guyes and Ben Haseley.

But it was the home side who took the lead on 22 minutes of this Evo-Stik Northern First Division South game when Shaun Tuton latched onto a long ball and lobbed it over Yeltz goalkeeper Paul Evans.

Steve Warne increased the lead with a hard shot 10 minutes later.

Two goals from Richard Stirrup within a minute put paid to any chance Halesowen had of getting back in the game, as he provided neat finishes from the edge of the box on 34 and 35 minutes.

Halesowen fought back in the second half but were again guilty of missing chances, though they did get a consolation 10 minutes from time. Ben Haseley's shot was stopped on the line, but the ball came back out to Naveed Arshad and he followed up to smash it into the net.

Heathens swoop to land Greaves

DUDLEY HEATHENS have won the race to sign brilliant speedway youngster Nathan Greaves for the 2013 season.

Greaves, 15 in February, is the British Under-16 Champion in 500cc and 250cc categories. He will race at reserve next season along-side Max Clegg.

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WIN HELPS POINT WAY FOR TITLE BID

JASON WELBORN warmed up for his British welterweight title shot against Frankie Gavin with a points win at Wolverhampton Civic Hall — and some southpaw training.

Midlands champion Welborn will get his chance against Gavin at Walsall Town Hall on Friday, January 18 with the bout screened live on BoxNation.

With that in mind, Czech southpaw Jan Balog was shipped in to face Welborn at Wolverhampton — and the 30-year-old showed the Rowley Regis man what to expect.

A disappointed 10-rounder saw Welborn get rounds in against a southpaw and deck him twice, only for the visitor to rise each time and take him to the distance.

First, Balog slumped to the canvas from a right hook to the body and then, in the final session, was hit by a right hook to the temple that made him take a knee again.

Victory was Welborn's by a 100-89 but he left with a clearer idea of what is ahead.

Chance

On the undercard, Walsall's Martin Gethin will finally get a chance at the now-vacant British and Commonwealth lightweight belts against Ben Murphy.

A third title contest sees Walsall's Christopher Keane face ex-British champion Shane McPhilbin for the belt he still holds, the Midlands cruiserweight title.

Keane took on Ugandan-born Northern Ireland resident Moses Matovu at Wolverhampton in a six-rounder. The 26-year-old ex-ABA super-heavyweight national amateur champ blew off ring rust built up since starting as a pro.

After leaving the amateurs more than three years ago, Keane has had eight fights and is undefeated.

Against Matovu Keane focused and took chances on

by Craig Birch



Thomas Costello celebrates

the inside to score the most eye-catching of the punches, winning 60-54 on points.

Bloxwich's Luke Paddock, a Clubs for Young People national finalist as an amateur, turned pro with a four-round light welterweight fight against Matt Seawright.

Seawright was given just a share of one round. Birmingham's Andrew Robinson and Thomas Costello added wins to unbeaten records, at light-middleweight and super-middleweight respectively.

Robinson won a brawl with Trowbridge's Dan Phelps 40-36 on points, while Costello crumpled Hungarian Norbert Szekeres in half with body shots.



Jason Welborn, left, pins Jan Balog to the ropes and lands a right hook to the body. Pictures: Patrick Mulvaney

Knockout! Costello is a Natural

by Craig Birch

BIRMINGHAM boxer Thomas 'The Natural' Costello says he's ready to get in the middleweight mix after a stunning one-punch knockout.

Darren Barker and Kerry Hope meet in a clash of former champions on the big show at Olympia on Saturday night — and Costello wants to meet the winner.

The 23-year-old from Birmingham sent out a message to Britain's top middleweights at Wolverhampton Civic Hall.

Two weeks earlier, Norbert Szekeres

had extended former European champion Hope the six-round distance — but the Hungarian couldn't take Costello's power.

He took the full count on his knees in the third after Costello whipped in a perfect left hook to the body and afterwards told his handlers he rates 'The Natural' a better talent than Hope.

Manager PJ Rowson said: "Thomas went out there to make a statement — and he did just that. He wanted to make

people sit up and take notice because he wants the big fights.

"Thomas sparred Billy-Joe Saunders when they were amateurs — and would fight him tomorrow. But the fight he really wants is against the winner of Darren Barker and Kerry Hope on Saturday night.

"Thomas has served his apprenticeship and now it's time for him to step up and show he can mix it with the big boys. He has matured into a big, strong middleweight — and is ready to fight anyone in Britain."

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